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**THE CONVERGENCE OF EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHY AND TEACHING:
CONSIDERING INFLUENCES OF EMOTIONALITY ON FEMALE HIGH
SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORK**

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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MAJOR: CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Approved By:

Advisor

Date

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DEDICATION

“The radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a ‘circle of certainty’ within which reality is also imprisoned. On the contrary, the more radical the person is, the more fully her or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can better transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled.” – Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

This work is dedicated to those who have shown me that the power of transformation lies in small decisions, small choices, and small actions.

To Roman Pross for introducing me to the beauty of rushing streams, peaceful rivers, whispering trees and buzzing bees.

To Charles Knudson for demonstrating that the power of poetry can transcend the drudgery of the factory as easily as reading the *Collected Poems of Robert Frost*, tucked neatly into the side pocket of a pickup truck.

To Juanita Bilinsky for teaching me that “some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”

To Peg Olson for challenging me to question authority and battle injustice.

To Henry Giroux for compelling me to read the world critically and change it when necessary.

To John Dewey for illustrating that education is not preparation for life, but is life itself.

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This journey began over 30 years ago, as I sat in high school classrooms, engaged in the lessons of the day, thinking about how I could truly make a difference in a world immersed in perpetual war and ongoing social injustice. This is when I first realized the power of education and the role teachers have in facilitating our ability to understand the present and to shape the future. It is with this lens that I wish to acknowledge all of the teachers who have enriched my life and made not only this journey, but also my lifelong goal of earning a doctoral degree, possible.

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Beyond the confines of the university, there are many other teachers I wish to acknowledge. First, my daughter, Amanda. In many ways, we embarked on this journey together. Amanda, your patience and understanding allowed me to keep going and work through my occasional tears and frustration. To my dear husband, R., whose insight, support, and conversation gave me the confidence I needed to persevere and complete

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Tables (2)	xii
List of Figures (14)	xiii
CHAPTER 1: EMOTIONALITY AND TEACHING	1
Overview	1
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions	3
Teaching and Connecting: Introductory Anecdotes	8
Background of the Problem	11
Considering the Role of Language in Understanding Teachers' Work	14
Language, Discourse and Education	16
Emotional Intelligence and Understanding	18
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LITERATURE REVIEW	21
Introduction to the Chapter	21
Theoretical Perspective Overview	21
Social Constructionism	24
Semiotics and Meaning Making	25
Critical Theory	28
Gender and Emotion	31
Social Class and Emotion	36
Understanding Emotionality	42
Connecting Teachers' Emotions to their Teaching	44

Emotion, Culture, Power, and Ideology	47
Using Emotional Geographies to Define Teachers' Emotional Understanding	49
Emotional Transactions Shape Teacher Identity	53
Conclusion	61
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	63
Overview	63
Using Ethnographic Methodologies	65
Role of the Researcher	68
Researcher Bias	70
Site Selection	72
Working Class School	73
Middle Class School	74
Affluent Class School	74
Participant Description and Recruitment	75
Duration and Timeline of the Study	79
Data Collection	80
Researcher Reflective Journal	80
Survey	81
Focus Group Interviews	82
Individual Interviews	84
Member Checks	85
Data Analysis	86
Coding the data	87

Discourse Analysis	88
Research Ethics and Trustworthiness	92
Summary	94
CHAPTER 4: SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS	96
Overview	96
Holistic description of research participants	97
Gender	98
Socioeconomic class	99
Age and experience	103
Describing the work of high school teaching	104
Grade levels represented	104
Classes taught	105
Teacher obligations at school beyond the teaching day	107
Teacher obligations at home beyond the teaching day	108
Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for teaching	109
Intrinsic motivation	111
Personal sense of interest	112
Personal sense of agency	113
Extrinsic motivation	114
Professional encouragement	115
Professional interest	116
Teachers' perceptions about autonomy in the workplace	116
Autonomy and what teachers teach	118

Autonomy and how teachers teach	119
Teachers' perceptions as informed by their relationships	120
Relationships with students	121
Relationships with parents	122
Relationships with colleagues	123
Relationships with administrators	124
Description of the emergence of focus group data	125
Teachers' perceptions about the purposes of education	125
Teachers' perceptions about teachers	131
Perceptions of teacher	132
Personal sense of being	132
Professional sense of interaction	134
Perceptions about high school English teachers	135
Personal qualities of high school English teachers	136
Professional qualities of high school English teachers	137
Exploring the relationships that inform teachers' professional geographies	138
Perceptions of relationships with students	138
The role of the teaching professional	140
Teachers' professional values	142
Teachers' personal values	143
Perceptions of relationships with parents	144
Exploring the teacher-parent interaction continuum	144
Hyperinvolved parents	146

Supportive parents	147
Uninvolved parents	149
How parents view teachers' professional qualities	150
How parents view teachers' personal qualities	151
Perceptions of relationships with colleagues	152
Understanding collegial relationships	152
How colleagues view teachers' professional qualities	153
How colleagues view teachers' personal qualities	154
Perceptions of relationships with administrators	154
How teachers perceive their administrators	155
How administrators view teachers' qualities	156
Summary	156
CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDY FINDINGS	160
Overview	160
Working Class School – Francesca	162
School demographic information	162
Teacher background and experience	162
Perceptions about the work of teaching	166
Perceptions about curriculum	168
Perceptions about instruction	171
Perceptions about relationships	172
Students	174
Parents	176

Colleagues	179
Administrators	180
Middle Class School – Jane	181
School demographic information	181
Teacher background and experience	182
Perceptions about the work of teaching	184
Perceptions about curriculum	188
Perceptions about instruction	189
Perceptions about relationships	192
Students	193
Parents	197
Colleagues	200
Administrators	201
Affluent Class School – Elizabeth	205
School demographic information	205
Teacher background and experience	205
Perceptions about the work of teaching	210
Perceptions about curriculum	213
Perceptions about instruction	215
Perceptions about relationships	216
Students	216
Parents	217
Colleagues	219

Administrators	220
Summary	223
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS	224
Overview	224
Discussion of Research Findings	226
Implications	233
Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research	235
Appendix A: Principal Email Query Letter	238
Appendix B: Research Information Sheet for Principal Query	239
Appendix C: Teacher Query Email	242
Appendix D: Behavioral Research Informed Consent	243
Appendix E: Research Study Survey	246
Appendix F: Focus Group Interview Questions	250
Appendix G: Individual Interview Questions	251
References	252
Abstract	274
Autobiographical Statement	276

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Duration and timeline of the study	79
Table 2: Data sources, purposes, collection processes, and analysis methods	90

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Research Participants by Gender	98
Figure 2: Teaching Profession Gender Composition	99
Figure 3: Research Participant Perceived SES Formative Years	100
Figure 4: Research Participant Perceived Current SES	101
Figure 5: Self-reported Annual Household Income	102
Figure 6: Grade Levels Taught, by Gender	105
Figure 7: Types of Courses Taught, by Gender	106
Figure 8: Weekly Hours Spent at Home on the Work of Teaching, by Gender	109
Figure 9: Intrinsic Motivations for Becoming a High School English Teacher	112
Figure 10: Extrinsic Motivations for Becoming a High School English Teacher	115
Figure 11: Teachers' Perceived Autonomy to Determine and Choose Curriculum	117
Figure 12: Teachers' Perceived Autonomy to Determine and Choose Teaching Methodology	119
Figure 13: Teachers' Perceptions of the Purpose of Education, by School Type	128
Figure 14: Visual representation of three types of parents with whom teachers engage, by closeness to or distance from each interaction	145

CHAPTER 1: EMOTIONALITY AND TEACHING

Overview

This study examined the ways in which sociocultural and professional emotional geographies, as defined by Hargreaves (2001), contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions of the work of teaching. In chapter one, I begin with the rationale and research questions that guided this study. Next, I provide an overview of public education in the United States to establish a broader context for understanding both historic reasons underlying the composition of the profession as well as factors that contribute to female teachers' perceptions of the work of teaching. To build on this context, I then explore the complex nature of language, particularly how it is used to construct and define teachers' sociocultural and professional understandings of their work. Furthermore, I argue that if we are to have a comprehensive understanding of teachers' sociocultural and professional geographies, we must go beyond traditional cognitive considerations of teachers' work by embracing the importance of the concept of emotional intelligence and the specific emotional geographies that emerge from their study as a crucial aspect that shapes female teachers' perceptions about their work.

Chapter two explains the theoretical framework and research literature that directed this study. The chapter begins by defining and explaining the theoretical framework that guided this research, social constructionism. Following this, I explain the connection between semiotics and historical views of emotion in order to argue for a semiotic view of the construct of emotion that will support how both sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to secondary English teachers' perceptions and understandings of their work. After this foundation is created, I include a thorough

review of research literature to continue to build a case for the consideration of the importance of the role of emotion in teaching. Finally, I explore the significance of how English teachers' transactions around the discourses of gender and class contribute to the process or processes by which emotionality is socially constructed.

Chapter three outlines the methodologies that framed this research study. I begin with a description of the study design, which utilizes ethnographic methodologies, followed by the background for the study and researcher bias. Next, I detail the research process, which includes a rationale for the ethnographic methodologies the study proposes to use. Then, I explain the methods for both the initial collection and the analysis of the research data. Finally, the chapter will address issues of end trustworthiness and ethics before concluding.

Chapter four examines the findings of two components of the research study: the survey and the focus group interviews. The chapter begins with a holistic description of study participants, followed by analysis according to participants' gender. Further, because focus groups were comprised solely of female teachers, eliminating the gender variable, data was considered through the lens of socioeconomic status, specifically the socioeconomic status of the teacher's school of employment. The analysis of the survey and focus group data was then discussed according to Hargreaves' (2001) concepts of closeness and distance, elements of emotionality, representing teachers' ongoing relationships through the course of their work and how those relationships influence how they perceive and understand the work of teaching. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Chapter 5 considers the case studies of three female high school English teachers. Each teacher represents a unique school: working class, middle class, and affluent class. Throughout the chapter, I explore the individual qualities of each teacher's experience while also comparing and contrasting the teachers' experiences in their classrooms. Each case study begins with a description of the school's demographics. This is followed by the teacher's perceptions about the school and its culture. Next, I provide information about each teacher's background and experience as a means to transition into their perceptions about the work of teaching as well as their perceptions about the relationships in which they engage in the course of their work. I conclude the chapter with a brief summary.

Chapter 6 discusses the significance of the research findings based on the two questions that guided the study. Further, the chapter also considers the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future research before concluding.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This qualitative study explores how emotionality contributes to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching. Specifically, drawing on Hargreaves' (2001) research model, this study utilized the concepts of *emotional understanding* and *emotional geographies* as a framework for evaluating and understanding the complex relationships that occur in the process of teaching as a means to further research in the field of high school English education and the professional preparation of English teachers. These concepts are briefly described later in this chapter and will be taken up in chapter 2.

Although my studies in the field of education and interest in teaching and learning initially brought me to this research, it became evident very early on that research in education, particularly research concerning emotionality, is informed by a number of fields, and as such is truly interdisciplinary. Consequently, the focus for this research is derived from the convergence of work in several fields: psychology, sociology, philosophy and education. In order to study the complexities inherent in the relationships in which teachers engage on a daily basis as they conduct their work, this inquiry sought to understand not only the unique perspectives of high school English teachers as individual agents or actors, but also how external factors such as culture, gender, and class intersect to affect how they perceive and understand their work.

To begin, the exigency for this work was in the need to move beyond current views of teacher efficacy that are cognitively based and tend to focus on areas that are easily quantifiable (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Ayers, 2001). For prospective teachers and teacher educators, K-12 education in the post-NCLB United States includes not only university coursework, but requisite basic skills testing, subject area testing, and student teaching. Candidates who succeed in these initial phases begin applying for teaching positions and eventually enter the field as new teachers. Once in their own classrooms, teachers are faced with mandatory evaluations based, in part, on another type of quantifiable data: student test scores. But while it is undeniable that factors such as a teacher's skill, content knowledge and cognition impact teaching and learning, these cognitively based factors represent only one dimension of understanding these processes (Hargreaves, 1998).

Absent from this process is any acknowledgement of, or consideration for, understanding the effect of emotion as a factor that similarly contributes to teachers' perceptions and understandings of their work and which ultimately impacts classroom events and students' learning. Traditionally marginalized in western thought, research concerning the role of emotion in teaching is relatively recent. At the heart of this type of research is the recognition that teaching is an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 1994; Nias, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998; Case et al, 2000; Zembylas, 2003; and Malm, 2009).

Based on this understanding, this study was guided by Hargreaves' (2001) work that incorporates the concept of *emotional understanding* as a means to identify and define the *emotional geographies* that result from a variety of relationships expressed by teachers in Hargreaves' research. Emotional understanding is an essential, semiotic-based, component of the processes of teaching and learning, requiring participants to draw on past experiences as a means to understand the experiences of others (Denzin, 1984). When teachers do not establish strong interpersonal connections with others during the course of their work, they lack the emotional understanding that is imperative to avoid misunderstanding (Hargreaves, 2001). Denzin (1984) and Hargreaves (2001) explicitly link teacher quality to emotional understanding, where successful teachers engage in building the relationships that allow effective teaching and learning, while ineffective teachers often do not, opening the door for misunderstanding and, ultimately, substandard learning.

It was through his analysis of how teachers negotiate emotional understanding that Hargreaves (2001) was then able to define the five distinct areas (sociocultural, moral, professional, physical, and political) that comprise the emotional geographies of

teaching as “patterns of closeness and distance in human interactions that shape the emotions we experience about relationships to ourselves, each other, and the world around us” (p. 1056). Although his research with emotional geographies was focused on teacher-parent interactions, I argue that Hargreaves’ framework established on the basis of this limited interaction is also a sound one for exploring how emotionality contributes to the way high school English teachers understand their work, particularly given that “the recurrent emotional experiences that people have in their respective occupations affect their identities and their relationships in distinctive ways” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1057). For teachers, there are many interactions beyond those with parents that inform their workplace experiences, including, but not limited to, those with students, colleagues, and administrators. The intent of this research was to explore how these areas of interaction, as understood and perceived by the teachers, and which are absent from Hargreaves’ research, might further contribute to the body of knowledge about how high school English teachers perceive and understand their work.

Further, because the work of investigating all five emotional geographies would be a daunting task in this venue, this study focused on two areas particularly salient for high school English teachers: sociocultural and professional geographies. The importance of studying the sociocultural geography stems from the issue that now, more than any time in history, students and their families belong to different cultures than their teachers, whether that be due to differences in social class or ethnocultural diversity (Delpit, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Similarly, the professional realm in which high school English teachers work, the majority of whom are female, is defined through a male-dominated gender model

containing expectations often at odds with feminine ways of being and knowing (Grumet, 1988). Given this context is predicated upon the notion that professionals operate in a manner that is critical and detached, there appears to be a conflict between the systemic structure in which teachers are expected to work and the expectation that good teachers forge positive relationships on the job (Hargreaves, 2001).

In addition, social class is equally important to the consideration of gender to the composition of sociocultural and professional geographies. While teachers are solidly situated as white collar, middle class professionals (Thompson & Hickey, 2005), research has shown that their expectations for students can vary based on their students' social class (Anyon, 1980 & 1981; Giroux, 1988a; Stevens, Markus & Phillips, 2014), reflecting their own class-based perceptions and understandings (Vincent & Warren, 1998). The resulting emotional responses that comprise both sociocultural and professional geographies could have wide-ranging effects in terms of establishing the positive relationships that strengthen teaching and learning.

Moreover, in his study, Hargreaves (2001) identified elements of both closeness and distance as aspects of emotional geographies, although he chose to focus exclusively on research describing emotional distance. By narrowing my interest to sociocultural and professional geographies, I investigated the areas of both closeness and difference that emerge from these categories in order to present a holistic view of the emotional understanding that belies sociocultural and professional emotional geographies.

When teacher efficacy is determined only by cognitive measures, as trends in teacher testing and evaluation according to student test scores indicate, and we neglect to acknowledge the significant role of emotion, then any understanding of the complexities

of the profession are heretofore incomplete. At the same time, conceding that emotionality is pivotal to providing a holistic understanding of teachers and their work will provide a comprehensive model for gaining a deeper knowledge of the ways in which female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work. Although there is a great body of work in the field of education that examines issues of gender and class as they pertain to students, research that focuses on the influence of gender and class on teachers' identities and understandings of their profession is more limited. In addition, there is no existing research that examines this issue through the related concepts of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies. As a result, this study embraced Hargreaves' work as a means to explore this distinct gap in the research.

Based on these ideas, my research investigated the following questions:

1. *In what ways does the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching?*
2. *How do the interrelated discourses of gender and class inform emotional geographies and shape female high school English teachers' understanding of their professional identities?*

Teaching and Connecting: Introductory Anecdotes

Unwittingly, the impetus for this study began in separate experiences years apart. The first was in a high school classroom when, as a fifteen year-old girl, I became transfixed by my teacher's words. Whether she discussed being a Freedom Fighter in the south during the Civil Rights movement or traveling to China when its borders were

reopened after decades of insulation, Ms. Olsen's narratives took me outside of my own narrow experience and into another, imparting a sense of *possibility* that I would have not known otherwise. But my connection did not stop there. We continued to build upon the student-teacher relationship in the classroom after class as well, where I was always welcomed into her room. Whether I was helping her grade papers, asking more details about assignments, or just chatting about life matters, we established a relationship, an emotional bond, that seemed anathema to the relationships I had with adults in my working class, male dominated home life, where thinking aloud about such things was frowned upon as idle dreaming. While I was always an avid reader, it was this additional interaction – one filled with stories and discussion within an atmosphere of support – that solidified my understanding. Cognitive knowledge was edifying and absolutely necessary, but without the integration of emotional understanding my relationship with Ms. Olsen provided, my education would not be complete.

While the impact of my relationship with Ms. Olsen has never left me, my own professional experience as a high school English teacher also shaped the direction for this academic research. Fifteen years later, I found myself in my own classroom, teaching high school English in a suburban school district in southeastern Michigan. It was here that I formed a strong professional bond with another new teacher. Countless days, we conversed about our love for the profession: sharing stories about the moments of epiphany we observed when students “got it,” teaching each other about our respective areas of expertise, and, most importantly, discussing our common view that we were involved in a profession where we could make a positive difference in our society, contributing to the future in a meaningful, tangible way.

And then it fell apart.

The semester after she obtained tenure, she informed me she would be leaving her position. I was at a loss for words. We received accolades from the administration and community about our work. Students readily embraced our progressive teaching styles and philosophies and their parents sung our praises. Most of the time. She had embraced a profession where she thought she would have an impact – and in our many conversations her love of teaching was always apparent -- but that wasn't enough to keep her in the classroom. After a particularly confrontational experience with a parent and an administrator, she decided to leave the profession. I had difficulty coming to terms with why someone who was so innovative, passionate, and successful would make a decision to leave the field. But she did, as many other teachers do. Her difficulty did not stem from any kind of cognitive deficit – she was a highly qualified content area expert – but as a result of negative emotional interactions in the workplace.

These two experiences compelled me to this research. While approximately 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years, little research has been conducted that specifically addresses how emotional factors affect the way high school English teachers perceive and understand their work (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008). This is important because the work of English teachers is now much more scrutinized given the current climate of high-stakes testing and continuing whirlwind of educational change (Burns, 2007). For example, the focus on teacher accountability in relation to students' test scores by external forces, such as government, school administrators, parents and community members, often results in internal forces, signified by teachers' response to these external forces, interacting in complex and profound ways (Hahs-

Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Hargreaves, 2001). These competing and complex discourses significantly affect teachers' emotional relationships to their work (Hargreaves, 2001), and, as such, were worthy of further study to understand the extent to which emotionality contributes to how female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work.

Background of the Problem

This investigation of how emotionality affects how female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work is predicated upon a historical understanding of the American public education system. Beginning with the distinct reasons underlying the composition of the teaching force and extending to the purposes of public education, this section establishes a beginning framework for understanding the complexities of the educational system that support the foundation for conducting research focusing on the affect of emotionality as a construct for examining high school English teachers.

Prior to the mid-19th century, school administrators, teachers and students were predominantly male, with the exception of females from wealthier households, who tended to be schooled privately at home (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999, p. 154). Common school reforms that occurred in the mid-1800s, however, radically changed this dynamic, ushering in a transition to a "hierarchical organization [that] required a division of duties and subordination to authority" that saw an influx of women into the teaching force and men into school administration (Spring, 1986, p. 113).

In 1840, Horace Mann (1957) began advocating for the inclusion of women into the ranks of teachers, rationalizing that young children would be better served in schools

by female teachers who historically occupied the social role of compassionate caretaker in the home. Concurrently, compulsory education requirements established during the century necessitated the addition of female teachers who were seen as a stable workforce that could provide children with a solid education much more inexpensively than the male schoolmasters who tended to enter the profession briefly before moving on to higher paying work (Spring, 1986). This transition not only set a precedent in public education of hiring primarily women because they could be paid less than men, but also exacerbated the gender disparity in the teaching profession, which was dominated by women by the end of the Civil War (Spring, 1986; deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999). The aftermath of this great shift is still seen today, as 75% of public K-12 teachers are women, 83% of whom are Caucasian (Aud et al., 2012).

At the same time, however, it is important to note that in spite of the large numbers of white women teaching in K-12 education in the United States, a solidly middle class occupation, their administrators have historically been – and continue to be -- primarily white upper class men (Tallerico & Blount, 2004). Although Sanchez & Thornton (2010) indicated little research has been done to investigate the reasons underlying gender disparities in K-12 administration, Aud et al. (2012) noted slight increases in the percentage of women who became principals between the 1999-2000 and 2007-2008 school years, from 52 to 59 percent in public elementary schools and from 22 to 29 percent in public secondary schools. What is key is that those who are making the decisions that drive the female-dominated field of K-12 education are disproportionately male compared with their overall numbers in the population (United States Census, 2010).

From this information emerges a picture of the face of American public education that reveals a teaching force that is overwhelmingly white, female, and middle class, but also one that is subjugated by a predominantly white, male, upper class power structure ripe for favoring and perpetuating conditions that favor both oppression and domination (hooks, 1999). Combined with the reform efforts in the 21st century that have worked to define the teaching profession in terms of mandates and control, American education is a system whose rules are dictated by men to be implemented by women, representing a privileged, male dominated educational discourse (Giroux, 1988b). As a result, women – teachers, in this instance – find themselves complying with men in perpetuation of men’s ways of knowing to the exclusion of their own ways of knowing (Grumet, 1988): a concept Gilligan (1982, 1993) identified as the “Culture of Femininity,” where women are pressured by outside forces to submerge their identities and silence their voices, as the research literature presented in chapter 2 will show.

While Hargreaves’ (1994, 1998, 2001, 2005) work has made a strong case for the consideration of emotionality as a construct through which to view teachers’ perceptions and understandings of their work, the sociocultural and professional emotional geographies he introduced are excellent beginning points to frame this particular research. However, analysis of the American educational system, specifically the gender and class composition of the teaching force, indicate the need for further research regarding how these lenses may or may not impact the way female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work.

My contribution to the body of research addressing emotional understanding and emotional geographies is to view them through distinct lenses of gender and class in

order to address these specific gaps in the research. To do this, I will focus on the importance of language and the discourses that emerge from it as elements that provide an entry point for exploring these roles. The following sections will introduce the construct of emotionality, providing a rationale supporting how it will guide this research, as well as make an argument for the importance of analyzing teachers' use of language as a means for both understanding emotionality and allowing the research to focus specifically on the effects of gender and class in understanding how female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work.

Considering the Role of Language in Understanding Teachers' Work

Bakhtin's (1981) notion of interanimation, where "the world in language is half someone else's" until "the speaker populates it with his own intention" (p. 294) allows a means by which to consider the many ways language affects how teachers perceive and understand their work. While language allows the representation and communication of ideas, its implications are much wider reaching, expressing the inherent values and beliefs of its adherents (Dyson, 2010). As such, Dyson (2010) argued that language also facilitates the construction of our identity.

In the current era of standardization, where the focus on implementing uniform teaching standards, curriculum, and testing, is at levels never before seen, the stakes are high for educators, whose voices oftentimes are silenced in the name of authoritative control (Dyson, 2010). Because education dictates work as public speech and has traditionally been utilized by the state "for the shaping of the selective traditions of literacy teaching and learning" (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 198), the power inherent in this public speech is undoubtedly "a political way of maintaining or modifying the

appropriation of discourses along with the knowledges and powers they carry” (Foucault, 2004, p. 1469).

For English teachers specifically, a cognitive dissonance has arisen, because they must operate in two worlds: one that acknowledges not only the importance of recognizing multiple literacies – those both in and out of school -- and how those literacies shape identity, but also a second, where it is often mandated that teachers follow pre-packaged curriculum and scripted lessons. It is in this tension where the significance of Bakhtin’s notion of language is key: the words of dictators fall flat until they are taken up by the education community, however reluctantly, and are given meaning through implementation. However, when people are not able to engage in meaningful dialogue, then they are marginalized, living lives where they have no agency. The limiting language of education as demonstrated by policy decisions and the administrative dictates that often result, ultimately affect teachers’ perceptions of who and how they are in the world – their identities – and how they view and perform the daily tasks of teaching. Given that many teachers enter the profession to help their students, the inability to do so ultimately has a negative effect on how teachers perceive their work (Scherff & Hahs-Vaughn, 2010). How, then, are they able to become part of Bakhtin’s dialogic in which meaning in language is derived from distinct interaction?

It is in this environment that Burke’s (1966) definition of language as symbolic action becomes important, as language functions not only as a means of utilitarian communication but also as a tool that reveals social hierarchy. In addition to establishing hierarchical structures, language also functions with multiple voices existing simultaneously, with gender emerging as a consideration representative of women’s ways

of knowing (Hohne & Wussow, 1994). Given the overwhelmingly female gender composition in the teaching profession, inequities that result from gendered language difference exemplify women's hierarchical struggles in their positions as classroom teachers (Gasbarrone, 1994). When teachers are rendered innocuous in their classrooms due to such inequities, their sense of agency can be limited, affecting their ability to use language to critique and transform their practice (Gramsci, 1971; Giroux, 1988b; Freire, 2007). The research presented in chapter 2 will explore these ideas further.

Language, Discourse and Education

Language is both personal and political, but inherent in educational arenas is the idea that political language is so powerful that instead of creating fields of intersection, political language and personal language seem to exist on different planes within the larger language system, where political language is hierarchically more important than personal language and serves to manipulate it for its own purposes. In the course of performing their work, teachers constantly engage in language negotiations that are important considerations in any conversation about teaching (Hughes, 2012).

Given its complex nature, this research embraced a sociocultural understanding of language where meaning is connected "to people's experiences of situated action," such as their "perceptions, feelings, actions, and interactions" (Gee, 2008, p. 117). Gee (2008) argued that once agents are able to both internalize and externalize language, they become conversant in multiple discourses, or what he calls "Discourses with a big D" (p. 124). Understanding the many discourses in which high school English teachers engage will facilitate this research which seeks to understand how teachers perceive and understand their work, because discourses act as "identity kits," allowing participants to

“integrate ways of talking, listening, writing, reading, acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and feeling in the service of enacting meaningful socially situated identities and activities” (Gee, 2008, p. 124). Specifically, Gee’s concept that people engage in many discourses allows us to view female high school English teachers as participants in multiple discourse communities that may provide insight into how they perceive and understand the work of teaching based on their unique, constructed identities that are situated in personal and professional discourses.

Furthermore, the analysis of teachers’ multiple discourses provides the opportunity for researchers to consider “all the assumptions and information speakers leave unsaid” in order to understand “all the knowledge, assumptions, and inferences” that inform teachers’ communications (Gee, 2011b, p. 8). Because the study of the language that emerges from educational settings provides a means by which researchers can better understand the field (Temple-Adger, 2008), analyzing teachers’ discourses as a means to understand their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, as this study has attempted, shows promise to further our understanding of the role of emotionality in shaping teachers’ identities, as well as their perceptions and understandings of their work.

As the research presented in chapter 2 will show, language analysis offers researchers a window into understanding how discourses, particularly professional discourses at school, function beneath the surface of visibility. When external forces control the content of the curriculum as well as “the structures of text and talk,” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 356) the effect on female high school English teachers, whose work is dominated by both, is something this study sought to understand further. Brantlinger

(2003) argued that these kinds of power imbalances are disguised in the language of professional accountability, working to perpetuate them.

When teachers have little sense of control over *what* (content) and *how* (delivery) they teach, with no room to voice their frustrations or even attempt to enact change, their ability to be successful in the classroom can be compromised (Brantlinger, 2003). In writing about the nature of morale, Hocking (1941) indicated it “is something else than physical preparedness for an enterprise, something additional but not separable” (p. 303). Within that, he identified morale as being embedded in “the control of action” (Hocking, 1941, p. 303), undoubtedly an emotional manifestation determined by a combination of internal and external factors.

But one important consideration is the traditional place the role of emotion has occupied in western society, which has been relegated as a feminine, and thus inferior, way of being. Systems that marginalize the importance of the role of emotion, as the public education system does when it values cognitive measures over emotional ones, become susceptible to systemic weaknesses. This is where making the case for the consideration of emotional intelligence is vital to addressing the reasons underlying how female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work.

Emotional Intelligence and Understanding

Because discourses work in concert to comprise identity (Gee, 2008), and that as part of their profession teachers are affected by both overt and covert discourses, they ultimately affect teachers’ identities and how they perceive and understand their work. If we accept that teaching is an emotional practice, then it is possible to develop a deeper

and more nuanced understanding of the importance of emotion in negotiating meaning as it applies to teaching.

Moreover, considering the pejorative view of women's ways of knowing in American culture, it is not surprising that female ways of knowing are not acknowledged as valid ways of understanding the world (Grumet, 1988). Boler (1999) argued that issues of emotionality have been associated with feminine ways of knowing, resulting from the male hegemonic view that identifies emotion as a female construct that reflects weakness.

By extension, one might argue that any dismissal of emotional factors in any analysis of teachers or teaching, then, neglects to understand the teacher as a holistic entity, because, as Hegel argued, truth does not lie in parts, but in the whole. By the same token, Dewey (1916) said that emotion is undoubtedly an important aspect of being, maintaining its role as equal to that of cognition. Moreover, Barbalet (2002) explained that teaching is an emotional practice, and as such, requires us to attend to teachers' emotions if we are to positively shape the profession. In effect, if teachers feel valued, they tend to be able to perform their jobs much better (Hargreaves, 2005).

Scherff & Hahs (2008) indicated the main reasons English teachers leave the profession include discipline management issues, lack of commensurate compensation, and relationship issues with parents, faculty, administration, and students – all of which point to emotion as a factor in the rate of teacher attrition. Given the continual mandates for educational reform in conjunction with high teacher attrition rates in the United States, it is incumbent upon interested parties to be informed about how a holistic consideration of teachers that includes the recognition of the vital role emotion plays in the profession

can strengthen it. This research sought to discover not only the extent to which emotion is a factor in the ways female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work, but also to identify the effect of gender and class within that dynamic.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Chapter

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to investigate how the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, as well as how the interrelated discourses of gender and class inform these emotional geographies and shape female high school English teachers' understanding of their professional identities. First, I provide an overview of the theoretical position of the study, which includes three subsections: social constructionism, semiotics, and critical theory. Further, in a review of the research literature situated in emotionality, I define emotionality and then connect the concept of emotionality to teaching. Following, I explore how emotion is constructed by culture, power, and ideology. Next, I demonstrate how Hargreaves' (2005) concept of emotional geographies provides insight into understanding the many complex relationships in which teachers engage. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion.

Theoretical Perspective Overview

This section provides an overview of the theoretical perspective informing this study. Because social constructionism supports multiple means of understanding, particularly as applied to the complex transactions surrounding teaching, it was the guiding epistemology of this study. It is also important to recognize that social constructionism is a perspective that is semiotic in nature, supporting the validity of multiple perspectives as well as acknowledging the importance and uniqueness of each teacher's experience. Further, the study is also situated in critical theory as a means to

understand how both gender and class inform teachers' emotionality, and subsequently their identities.

While the daily life for practicing secondary English teachers regularly consists of tasks including lesson planning, teaching, assessing, and managing the classroom, it is important to recognize the many influences beyond these tasks that affect teachers' perceptions and understandings of their work; particularly how the complexity of relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators construct and define their sociocultural and professional emotional geographies. The transactions that occur both within and across the varied discourses that comprise these relationships are both complex and unique to the individual teacher who negotiates them. As such, "classroom teaching and learning are embedded in a complex network of interdependent variables, all of them situation-specific, constituting a complex array of human/environmental behavior and variables" (Pine, 2009, p. 17).

This study is predicated on the assumption that the ways in which female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work are impacted by elements both inside and outside of the traditional classroom teaching experience. As a result, this study not only acknowledged the role of emotionality in teaching, something that has emerged in scholarship since the mid-1990s in the work of Hargreaves (1998, 2001, 2005) and others (MacLure, 1993; Beijaard, 1995; Boler, 1999; Barbalet, 2002; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Zembylas, 2003; Day et al., 2006; Darby, 2008; Farouk, 2010; Cowie, 2011; and Lee & Yin, 2011), but also investigated the significance of how transactions surrounding the discourses of gender and class contribute to the process or processes by which emotionality is socially constructed. The purpose of this research was to

understand the extent to which both the internal and external discourses of gender and class affect female teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching. To clarify, internal discourses represent personal beliefs or convictions that are internal to an individual, rooted in the individual's experience, and representative of the individual's ideas, approaches, knowledge, or feelings (Bakhtin, 1991; Matusov & von Duyke, 2010). In contrast, external discourses are those that are external to the individual and representative of the ideas, approaches, and knowledge of others (Matusov & von Duyke, 2010).

Lagemann (2000) and Frost et al. (2000) maintained that traditional positivistic research in education has been shortsighted and has failed teachers because it has neglected to consider the cultural and contextual factors that affect teaching. Similarly, others (Harris, 1992; hooks, 1994; Seidl & Friend, 2002; Standfield, 1993) have argued that traditional research privileges a male perspective, "producing a sexist knowledge base in which multiple ways of knowing and being are cast as deficiencies, further marginalizing already marginalized groups" (Pine, 2002, p. 9). Pine (2002) suggested current and future education research must address the traditionally marginalized issues of diversity and equity, something this study sought to do. When we acknowledge different ways of knowing, then we must acknowledge that those differences require different ways of researching. As a result, "what is required is an epistemology of practice that acknowledges our different ways of knowing and that takes fuller account of school context and the circumstances of teacher practice" (Pine, 2002, p. 25).

Based on the understanding that different ways of knowing require research that acknowledges varied perspectives, the next section will begin with this research's guiding

epistemology, social constructionism. I draw upon social constructionism, a semiotic construct, to establish a foundation for understanding the complexity of transactions that occur in constructing female high school English teachers' sociocultural and professional emotional geographies.

Social Constructionism

In social constructionism, “truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). In other words, social constructionism views truth as being relative to context, where there is no meaning until the individual's transactions with the larger culture *constructs* it. By extension, then, social constructionism carries the assumption “that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon” (Crotty, 1998, p. 9), thus viewing truth as something that is ultimately discoverable, though its discovery must first be constructed through lenses of interaction. While social constructionism is the guiding epistemology for this research, it is important to recognize that social constructionism assumes a semiotic framework that values and supports the unique transactions that occur as teachers construct emotionality. Given the many interactions surrounding the work of high school English teachers -- including those with texts, curriculum, students, parents, colleagues, and administrators – social constructionism supports an understanding of how the complex nature of teachers' daily transactions are both culturally dependent and individually unique. In effect, social constructionism allows us to observe, experience, connect, and create – in progression yet also simultaneously – the complex transactions that shape how female high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching.

In many ways, this conception of social construction operates according to a semiotic framework, because social constructionism is concerned with *how* knowledge is constructed and values truth as something ultimately discernable and relative to context. While the truth is discoverable, it does not occur in a vacuum and is not attributable to any individual. Rather, truth emerges through group interaction and is constructed as part of this social dynamic (Kuhn, 1970; Patton, 2002). Although truth is socially constructed, it is Kuhn (1970) who resurrected Marxist notions of struggle as contributing to that construction, where new paradigms – or ways of understanding – are created when conflicting worldviews compete to define how and what we know. By extension, then, Patton (2002) reasoned, “If knowledge is socially constructed and consensually validated, as opposed merely to consisting of empirical truths validated by nature, then surely all knowledge is socially constructed” (p. 99). As a result, this view supports qualitative research that seeks to investigate the extent to which sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers’ perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching and shape their professional identities. Because social constructionism embraces the importance of socially constructed truth as a means to understand the balance and interaction among these influences, it is an epistemology that is semiotic in nature and suited to provide a framework for understanding how teachers’ emotionality is shaped, something I will explore in the next section.

Semiotics and Meaning Making

Semiotic theory postulates that meaning is made through an understanding of sign systems that considers words, visual stimuli, and spatial stimuli as signs that shape understanding, a concept that illustrates how people interpret and create meaning (Siegel,

1995). Some of the key ideas that comprise a semiotic model are: each transaction is unique in the meaning it generates (Berghoff, 1998; Berghoff et al, 2003); the process of meaning making has unlimited generative potential (Siegel, 1995); and the event serves to expand and deepen meaning (Peirce, 1931- 58). While semiotic theory is a framework for understanding the process of how meaning is made, it also provides a way to validate the role of emotional intelligence in creating meaning, because all meaning is mediated through signs (Berghoff et al., 2003). In this study, which attempts to understand how sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to how female high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching, teachers' many interactions result in transmediation, a process that produces new meanings. This process is unique for each teacher, adding to the individual's collective body of knowledge (Siegel, 1995).

To explain this process more specifically, a semiotic process is a triadic relationship consisting of a *representamen*, *interpretant*, and *object*, whereby the *representmen*, or sign, is introduced to the *interpretant*, or person, who then translates that sign by a process called transmediation, where new meaning, the *object*, is created (Peirce, 1931-58). Because emotion itself is a sign, the semiotic process affords a more nuanced understanding of the importance of emotion in negotiating meaning as it applies to teachers and the work of teaching. A semiotic model assumes no two people will generate meaning the same way while also recognizing that meaning making is both social and contextual (Peirce, 1931-58; Harste et al., 1984; Siegel, 1995, 2006; Kress, 2000; Gee, 2011a). Teachers generate meaning about teaching individually and uniquely based on socially constructed transactions influenced by their own experiences and

relationships, no matter how similar or different the factors that contribute to their meaning making.

Further, Kress (2000) has called for a full expansion of semiotic theory that values all expressive modes, including emotionality. Kress's argument about valuing various modes of expression helps us understand the essential contribution of emotional intelligence to the teaching profession. Currently in Michigan, teacher certification and evaluation favor teachers' cognitive abilities as the arbiter of predicted classroom success. For example, the Michigan Department of Education's basic skills and subject knowledge examinations, the first step to gaining teacher certification, measure only teachers' cognitive knowledge. While teachers in training must successfully pass field experiences and coursework before gaining certification, the certification process does not prepare teachers to address the impact of the many emotional factors that affect teachers in their day-to-day work. A semiotic model affords the consideration of multiple factors that shape high school English teachers' professional identities as well as their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching. While recognizing the role of emotion in teaching as a semiotic process expands the ability for researchers to understand the significance of the transactions among teachers' knowledge, experience, and response, as contributing to their unique meaning-making processes (Siegel 1995, 2006), one barrier that has remained is a cultural marginalization of emotionality (as described on pp. 12-13).

In addition to the perspective that a semiotic understanding of emotionality provides, this research was also concerned with how the lenses of gender and class affect the ways teachers construct their emotionality. In the next section, I will argue that

critical theory provides a way to understand the experiences of female high school English teachers, and as a result offers insight into how they shape their professional identities, as well as how they perceive and understand the work of teaching. Two subsections that specifically address the critical perspectives of gender and class will follow it.

Critical Theory

While epistemologies, such as social constructionism, speak to how we *view* knowledge, theoretical perspectives explain how we *construct* that knowledge, the lens through which we view the world. While semiotics, discussed in the previous section, offer a way to understand the processes by which meaning is constructed, critical theory provides a specific framework for understanding how the specific lenses of gender and class contribute to the construction of teachers' knowledge and the meaning that emerges as a result of that construction.

First, critical theory is “a research that challenges [a situation] in terms of conflict and oppression ... a research that seeks to bring about change” (Crotty, 1998, p. 113). At the root of critical theory is the notion of power and control, a concept that Saul (cited in Crotty, 1998) interprets as the “ruling elites” maintaining power not by how “they use [their] knowledge, but on the effectiveness with which they control its use” (p. 113). Adopting a critical pedagogy reflects a “belief in education as a moral and political practice that should be judged in terms of how it prepares students to engage in a common struggle for deepening the possibilities of autonomy, critical thought, and a substantive democracy” (Giroux & Searls-Giroux, 2006, p. 21). Further, in his exhaustive review of classroom practices that support critical literacy, Behrman (2006)

argued that “critical literacy espouses that education can foster social justice [by recognizing] how language is affected by and affects social relations” (p. 490). What has blossomed since the reform movement began in the early 2000s is a tension between democratic values, such as those critical literacy supports, and market values, which have affected the many social relationships in which female high school English teachers engage (Giroux & Searls-Giroux, 2006).

Luke & Woods (2008) indicated “the rise of neoliberalism and its emphasis on market-based efficiencies” as the cause of “simplistic solutions” to what is presented in the media as “the latest perceived literacy crisis” (p. 197). The cascade of testing and the emotional transactions that have resulted have undoubtedly affected the ways female high school English teachers not only perceive and understand the work of teaching, but also how they shape and perceive their professional identities. From a sociocultural perspective, literacy is comprised of social practices that are “bound up with social, institutional, and cultural relationships [are] connected to social identities” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 13). This position effectively describes some of the many emotional transactions experienced by female high school English teachers. When teachers perceive that their work is not validated, they become trapped “into ‘circles of certainty’ from which they cannot escape,” (Freire, 2007, pp. 38-39) thus shaping their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching.

Significantly, some argue the reform movement has exacerbated teachers’ negative perceptions of the work of teaching, as policy makers and administrators “use their positions of authority and power to control the actions of educators” (Hoffman, 2000, p. 620). As a result, teachers have been cast as ineffective at best and unqualified

at worst, resulting in their alienation as possible partners in true educational reform (Bruner, 1996). Beyond this, however, high school English teachers have been more vigilantly scrutinized because of federal and state education policy mandates that focus on literacy testing. Luke & Woods (2008) argued that literacy education policy in the United States has actually constrained teachers' abilities "in providing equitable access to literacy pedagogy for students," affecting the educational experience of students according to factors of poverty, gender, race, and cultural-linguistic diversity, as well as having a demoralizing effect on teachers (p. 197).

In the workplace, teachers' lives are affected by the decisions imposed on them by others, often resulting in a variety of emotional responses that may include frustration, confusion, or even hostility. A critical approach to understanding how emotionality affects how high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching must be based on several lines of thinking. First, teachers, a primarily female population, are marginalized entities in an America that unrelentingly disparages them on many fronts, including in the media and on the political stage (Spring, 1986; Hargreaves, 1998b; Marshall, 1999; Marshall, 2004; Blackmore, 2009; Goodison, 2013). Second, that the majority of current teachers are situated in the middle class, but also recognizing that teaching has traditionally been a bridging occupation, allowing for social movement from the working class to the middle class for some, but also for maintaining a middle class existence for others (Hargreaves, 1998b; DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999; Blackmore, 2009; Goodison, 2013).

Because gender and class have distinct implications in the study of female secondary English teachers as the core constituency is primarily female and middle class,

this research will focus on gender and class to the exclusion of race. Although the racial composition of secondary English teachers may be an important consideration for other research delving into the inequities of racial representation in this segment of the teaching population, this inquiry focused on the majority members of the secondary English teaching force. Given that the population of high school English teachers is predominantly female and middle class, this research was particularly concerned with how gender and class may – or may not – contribute to how female high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching. The following two sections will further discuss gender and class as they apply to teachers and teaching.

Gender and Emotion

Given that eight of ten public school teachers are women (NCES, 2005), a focus on gender and gender issues was a key consideration for this study because the ways in which female secondary English teachers are affected by internal and external discourses are impacted by their gender (Stinebrickner, 1998; Imazeki, 2005). Kendall & Tannen (2008) maintained, “the study of gender and discourse ... reveals how language functions as a symbolic resource to create and manage personal, social, and cultural meanings and identities” (p. 548). In addition, Garrison (2003) highlighted a significant cultural difference in the socialization of girls and boys in traditional Western culture, where typically girls “are allowed to display a wider range of emotions, display more intense emotions, display them more frequently, and to display them in public” (p. 436). At the same time, he noted, “boys are taught rules that counter any kind of emotional expression at all, especially in public” (Garrison, 2003, p. 436). What is important here is the recognition of a great disparity in the ways women and men are socialized, and that

emotions are socially constructed. Therefore, as Garrison (2003) explained, “[they] are bound to have a politics” in further need of exploration, particularly as “feminists argue subtle systems of power shape the emotional display rules in Western culture in oppressive ways” (p. 436).

As Bordo (1989) argued, gender oppression “has to be acknowledged as an amazingly durable and flexible strategy of social control” (p. 14). Given that women constitute 80% of the teaching profession yet remain a minority in the power structures affecting it, as demonstrated by the male majority in educational administration and politics, research in this area must address questions of inequality and social control. In the realm of education, Bordo (1989) called for the abandonment, though, of “the idea of power as something possessed by one group” in favor of the consideration that “we must think instead of the network of practices, institutions, and technologies that sustain positions of dominance and subordination within a particular domain” (p. 15). I argue that these complex interactions influence female high school English teachers’ felt sense of identity, resulting in unique responses that influence the ways in which they perceive and understand the work of teaching.

Furthermore, Campbell (1994) wrote that when any given culture fails to validate emotional expression, the result is frustration, silence, and oppression (p. 55). Along these lines, Gilligan (1982, 1993) and Kristeva (1989) argued that female voices have been silenced as they have strived to enter – and be accepted – into the dominant masculine discourse community. Moreover, in her research around women and teaching, Grumet (1988) noted that this is not surprising given that children become gendered in a patriarchal world, where women are forced to compromise their female ways of knowing

when they enter the male-dominated public sphere, ultimately surrendering and perpetuating male ways of knowing.

Similarly, McRobbie (2009), who began her research in response to the gap in addressing gender and education she noticed in Willis' (1977) class-based work, made the case society conditions women to become subservient to the male-dominated culture, as seen by how young women are depicted in popular culture as tending to focus on shallow issues such as body image or consumerism. When young women's identities are formed in such a way, they unknowingly consign themselves to be second-class citizens, forever relegating themselves to a lifetime of submissiveness. This is particularly alarming given that women constitute a gender majority in the United States, while continuing to be kept in a perpetual state of subservience through a male minority that uses social, cultural, and political means as the dominant culture maintains its power and control, something that is true both across the culture as well as within societal institutions like education, as noted by Bardo (1989). Considering that scholarship indicates the education system is one that continues to reproduce current gender inequality (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Spring, 1986 & 2008; Apple, 1979; Freire, 2007; Giroux, 1988a), a broad recognition of – and commitment to – transforming the current paradigm is essential if the goal is to both value and understand the role of emotionality in teaching.

In like manner, hooks (1999) wrote of the importance of gender as a guiding factor in shaping who we are and what we know, where one's *être*, or way of being, is dependent upon social negotiation and interaction. As part of this however, she views education – the classroom, in particular – as an institutional place that is potentially

liberating for women if they are able to confront inequality, renegotiate their roles, and move beyond institutional patriarchy (hooks, 1994).

But recognizing institutional bias and having the ability to transform it, particularly in the secondary English classroom, are very different actions. Apple (1986) argued the reason school textbooks and materials “look the way they do is deeply related ... to the gender characteristics of the group of people who actually publish the materials,” who are predominantly white, middle- to upper- class men (p. 9). Research in education reveals consistent gender bias. Blumberg (2009) found that gender bias is near universal and uniform, camouflaged by continuing gender role stereotypes as seen in textbooks he studied worldwide. In one research study, Alvermann & Qian (1994) surveyed three history textbooks and noted that the only women who were included were those who contributed to social aspects of society, like the suffragette movement, whereas only men were represented in matters of economics and politics, exemplifying the ways in which identities are shaped – and limited – by institutional forces. Similarly, research by Zittleman & Sadker (2002) revealed gender bias in a study of 23 teacher education textbooks published from 1998-2001, with the least amount of equal gender representation found in textbooks aimed at teaching reading. This illustrates that high school English teachers, the majority of whom are female, experience gender bias even in their training at the university level.

Further, a majority of teachers will make their instructional decisions based on the textbooks they are required to use in their classrooms (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007). For the high school English teacher, this often means teaching texts written by male authors. Both Kelly (1995) and Applebee (1996) noted that the majority of books used in English

departments throughout the United States are those by the so-called “dead white guys,” such as Shakespeare, Steinbeck, Hemingway, and Golding, something that continues today. Moreover, Kelly (1995) noted that the literature currently taught in school has existed in the curriculum for so long that it is considered a “normalized, universalized, ahistorical, and elitist agent of the reproduction and continued reinsertion into discursive practices of conservative and oppressive sets of social relations” (p. 96). Further, Finders (1997) found conflicts in girls’ private and public discourses in her research of junior high school girls, arguing that women’s socially constructed gender identities not only contributed to their oppression, but that the content of the literature in their courses of study exacerbated it, resulting in a heightened sense of political and ideological struggle occurring as a result of their school-based literacy transactions. DeBlase (2003) also discovered that ideologies of control, power, and culture as represented in school-based texts and literature limited the way girls were able to construct their identities, again demonstrating the institutional perpetuation of male ways of knowing and revealing that literature study was not an emancipatory tool for unpacking gender (p. 321). Anyon (2013) indicated, “for girls, gender development will involve a series of attempts to cope with – and resolve – contradictory social messages regarding what they should do and be” (p. 19).

Undoubtedly, literacy and identity are inextricably linked, placing high school English teachers, who are both members of an educational institution that perpetuates male ways of knowing as well as arbiters of the literature that serves to do the same, in what might be described as dissonant roles, evidence of some of the many complex transactions that shape how they take up their work, something this study examined.

While initial feminist response to the indictment of institutional inequality has called for combatting patriarchal dominance with a widespread rejection of socially constructed feminine identities (Kristeva, 1989), others argue that women must embrace their femininity, particularly in the classroom, to foster an ethic of care that perpetuates women's ways of knowing (Noddings, 2006). But if that femininity is one that is defined by masculinity, a social construct of the power elite that perpetuates gender domination, then its abandonment is necessary in order to redefine femininity on its own merits and reconsider its role in understanding a gendered response to the ways female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work. Similarly, the impact of social class on the construction of emotion is an important consideration that will be explored in the next section.

Social Class and Emotion

This study also sought to examine the role of the distinct lens of social class in how female high school English teachers perceive and understand teaching. Social class was a particularly salient consideration in this study, because “class organizes the social, cultural, and material world in exceptionally profound ways” (Weis, 2004, p. 13). Because “social class constitutes perhaps the single most powerful source of inequality in society” (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999), and teachers are socially situated in the middle class whose constituency consists of low status white-collar professionals (Spring, 2008), this investigation also focused on understanding how a teacher's social class contributes to how she perceives and understands the work of teaching.

Although teacher salaries vary widely, with the best paid teachers in low-poverty schools earning approximately 35% more than the best paid teachers in high-poverty

schools, overall teacher salaries rank among the lowest for those holding four-year college degrees (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000, p. 140). This is an important consideration, as research tells us that there are distinguishable differences in the definition of and expectations for female behavior along class lines (Anyon, 2013).

Where working class women are culturally expected to adhere to traditional feminine behaviors of submission and subordination to men, middle class and affluent women operate under less rigid rules, but are nevertheless expected to fulfill traditional feminine roles of motherhood and homemaking while simultaneously forging success in the working world, further complicating the composition of their *être* (Anyon, 2013, pp. 19-20). Undoubtedly, “social class affects the experiences of women ... [though] it is important to consider all aspects of a person’s experience” (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999, p. 196). What these trends confirm, however, is the complexity inherent in matters involving the intersections of gender and class in teaching, a profession often identified with having a role in the reproduction of social and cultural norms (Apple, 1979; Freire, 2007; Giroux, 1988; Luke, 2010).

DeMarrais & LeCompte (1999) offered the following definition of social class:

Social scientists define social classes as groups of people who share certain characteristics of prestige, patterns of taste and language, income, occupational status (though not necessarily the same jobs), educational level, aspirations, behavior, and beliefs. Social classes are stratified, arranged in a pyramid-shaped hierarchy according to members’ wealth, power, and prestige... One’s place in society depends upon the amount of superiority he or she has in all of these realms. (p. 196)

The field of sociology makes explicit distinctions among class, status, power, and authority that must be considered in a study of this nature. “Specifically, one’s class is determined by the amount of political and cultural power as well as the extent to which

one both owns the means to one's own livelihood and can hire or control the labor of others" (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999, p. 200). Similarly, Anyon (1981) defined social class in the following way:

Social class is considered as a series of relationships to several aspects of the process in society by which goods, services, and culture are produced. That is, while one's occupational status and income level contribute to one's social class, they do not define it. Contributing as well are one's relationships to the system of ownership of physical and cultural capital, to the structure of authority at work and in society, and to the content and process of one's own work activity ... One's relationships to all three of these aspects of production (to the systems of ownership and authority, and to work itself) determine one's social class. (p. 4)

As such, Weis (2004) further refined the definition of social class as "stretching understandings of class so as to include the practices of everyday living" (p. 4). If one includes the act of day-to-day living as being a component of class, then "class is lived as an identity designation and not simply as an economic relation to the means of production" (Walkerdine et al., 2001, p. 13). As a result, one's social class is a key component to understanding how individuals perceive and understand emotional transactions.

Over the last 30 years, however, the teaching profession has seen a marked shift, particularly through "de-skilling," where the role of teachers has changed from content expert to content deliverer through scripted lessons and pre-written materials (Apple, 1986; Giroux, 1988; Ayers, 2001). Because of this, teachers have "relatively little control over their labor process" (Apple, 1986, p. 31). As a result, teachers occupy a peculiar space in the hierarchy, where their positions have become ambiguous given that much of their work is now dictated to them, as is the case with the working class, yet they also fall both educationally and economically in the middle class (Apple, 1986, pp. 32-33). Moreover, Brantlinger (2003) explained the significance of politics and its influence on social class hierarchies:

In modern times, social divisions are solidified and officially sanctioned by legislated regulations and professional protocols ... States mandate high-stakes tests and accountability measures to control teachers ... Power imbalances between local actors are depersonalized – professionals only do their jobs – so power relations are disguised as they are perpetuated. (p. 10)

Subsequently, one of the goals of this study was to consider how the ambiguity of role and position, dictated by emotional transactions, affects the way female high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching.

To begin this endeavor, it is necessary to define what, exactly, we mean by social class. While one group of sociologists, led by Bensman & Vidich (1971), divide the social hierarchy into six classes (upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower (or working class), this study will follow a Marxist inspired view of the hierarchy that includes three categories based on the extent to which constituents control the means of production: the proletariat (working class), the bourgeoisie (middle class), and the elite (affluent class) (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999, p. 200). In both of these models, teachers occupy the middle classes and are considered lower-middle class in the six-class hierarchy and middle class in the Marxist hierarchy. But, as the section below will indicate, recent educational trends have developed class ambiguity in respect to the place of teachers in the hierarchy, and the discourses that have propelled it, are undoubtedly profound, having a great impact on teachers' emotionality.

Recognizing that actions do not exist in a vacuum, but within “concrete social situations governed by a set of objective social relations” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 6), this study also utilized Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and cultural capital as lenses through which to understand how the culturally constructed transactions of gender and class affect teachers' emotionality. To begin, Bourdieu (1993) defined habitus as:

The system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (p. 5)

In this way, habitus serves as a *sens pratique*, or practical sense, that “inclines agents to act and react in specific situations” in a way that is neither predictable nor the result of any specific obedience to rules (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 5). Action and reaction are the result of individual transactions whose outcomes are always unique. This understanding, then, informs this study in that each emotional transaction transacts with the teacher’s habitus, or practical sense, resulting in specific actions and reactions based on the unique contextual understanding and experience of each individual teacher.

To further explain, Weis (2004) argued that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus allows a nuanced understanding of social class, offering the following description:

Habitus encompasses all of the general dispositions (ways of doing things, of reacting, of being) which result from the internalization and accumulation of past learning; a form of ‘know how’ inculcated by the family, the school, and the broader social environment as part of the generalized process of socialization. We become aware of our habitus (socially acquired dispositions) when we are immersed in a totally different milieu, a milieu whose rules of the game we do not know. (p. 12)

Moreover, Bourdieu (1984) noted in his research a similarity in how representatives from the same social class respond to similar situations, lending credibility to both an individual concept of habitus as well as a predictable group response. Thus, based on Bourdieu’s (1984) research, one can extrapolate the experiences of the individual to the broader group. For the middle-class teacher whose position has been transformed from content expert to content deliverer, the awareness of habitus in the course of this

transition to instructional disempowerment may result not only in the knowledge of difference, but also in a sense of disillusionment and dissonance.

Given Hargreaves' (2001) model of emotional geographies (see p. 51), which considers the complex relationships (sociocultural, moral, professional, physical, and political) and components (intersubjectivity and subjectivity) that govern emotionality, Bourdieu's concept of field offers a way to understand the structures of hierarchy that may affect teachers' emotionality and, ultimately, how they perceive and understand the work of teaching. Because Bourdieu (1993) recognized action and reaction as responses dependent upon specific contexts and situations, he developed the idea of field as a means to explain the significance of the impact contexts or situations have on individuals.

According to Bourdieu's (1993) model:

Any social formation is structured by way of a hierarchically organized series of fields (the economic field, the educational field, the political field, the cultural field, etc.), each defined as a structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force independent of those of politics and the economy, except, obviously, in the cases of the economic and political fields. Each field is relatively autonomous but structurally homologous with the others. Its structure, at any given moment, is determined by the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field. A field is a dynamic concept in that a change in agents' positions necessarily entails a change in the field's structure. (p. 6)

I would also argue that there must also be an acknowledgement of the significance in the discourses emanating from various fields in addition to the hierarchical consistencies Bourdieu (1993) defines. It is in that discourse language that Gee (2008) contended "language is not about conveying neutral or objective information; rather, it is about communicating perspectives on experience and action in the world, often in contrast to alternative and competing perspectives" (p. 120). Using field as a means to understand the distinctions of emotional geographies provides a specific model for conceptualizing

the unique contexts underlying teachers' emotional understandings. The next section will specifically define emotionality as a means to understand its role in teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching.

Understanding Emotionality

Barbalet (2002) defined emotion as an experience of involvement, where “*experience is emotion*, not the subject’s thoughts about their experience, or the language of self-explanation arising from experience, but that immediate contact with the world the self has through involvement” (p. 1). While the consideration of emotion in research has been generally disregarded, Barbalet (2002) qualified this by explaining, “all actions, and indeed reason itself, require appropriate facilitating emotions if successful actions or reason at all are to be achieved” (p. 1). This view can be understood to support the symbiotic relationship between reason and emotion exemplified in both Dewey (1931) and Vygotsky (1987) (discussed further on pp. 49-50) and establishes emotion as requiring social interaction as opposed to being based on “individual acts” (p. 3). Moreover, Barbalet (2002) envisioned a comprehensive understanding of emotionality in which “emotions link structure and agency,” where an individual’s social interaction not only makes sense of emotion, but also functions as a guiding principle in people’s ongoing management of their place in the world, signifying the role of emotion as action based in experience but negotiated by and through sociocultural and sociopolitical considerations, including those associated with “particular social processes or institutions” (p. 5), something this research study seeks to explore. To this end, Barbalet (2002) maintained, “the particular emotions that people experience arise out of the structure of the relations of power and status in which they are implicated” (p. 4), supporting this

study's consideration of the effects of the roles of the cultural constructs of class and gender as crucial to understanding the ways in which female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work.

Barbalet's understanding of emotion is consistent with Bourdieu's (1984) notion of habitus, essentially that social forces, in conjunction with individual experience, result in creating human beliefs and behaviors that reflect class and social conditioning, influences that are often unbeknownst to individuals (pp. 101-102). Similarly, these ideas represent a semiotic understanding of emotion as a transaction, where "emotion experienced in my body as subjective feelings is part of a transaction between myself and another. The emotion lies *in* the social relationship" (Barbalet, 2002, p. 4). In sum, Barbalet's (2002) work links the importance of social interaction in creating meaning, supporting the direction of this research study that seeks to examine the ways in which sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' identities as well as their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching. The next section will address current gaps in educational research about the role of emotion in teaching and discuss the how emotionality is a key factor in developing a comprehensive understanding of how high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching.

Connecting Teachers' Emotions to their Teaching

In a comprehensive review of the limited research addressing teachers' emotion and teaching, Sutton & Wheatley (2003) suggested teachers' emotions influence their cognitions, motivations, and behaviors. Their review found a lack of research "about the role of emotions in learning to teach, how teachers' emotional experiences relate to their

teaching practices, and how the sociocultural context of teaching interacts with teachers' emotions," (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 328), areas that this study sought to understand.

One issue that Sutton & Wheatley (2003) identified in their analysis of the literature is that experts do not agree on what constitutes emotion and that similar experiences do not manifest themselves similarly in different individuals, which implicitly supports the complexity of semiotic transaction. Nevertheless, they argued, "knowledge of teachers' emotions is essential in understanding teachers and teaching" (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 332), but also explained that emotion is represented in both positive and negative terms, further complicating their understanding.

Sutton & Wheatley (2003) were referring to a gap they discovered in the research, particularly as it concerned a lack of the consideration of the effects of culture and context in the interpretation of what constitutes positive or negative emotional experiences for classroom teachers. For example, one study of middle class White teachers revealed their experiences in a predominantly African American inner-city school were much more emotional than their training at the university had prepared them for (pp. 342-343). Although their university studies had prepared them in terms of coursework in human psychology, the absence of preparation in teachers' university coursework in addressing issues such as negative student behavior and factors outside of school, such as absent parenting and poverty, resulted in a high rate of both anger and frustration (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, pp. 333-334). While Sutton & Wheatley (2003) identified positive emotions teachers exhibited related to their work, particularly joy and caring, they also noted that when teachers' cultural experiences differed from those of their students or school culture, they tended to experience more anger and frustration,

with one teacher saying in response to a lack of parental concern about a student after the teacher reached out to the parent, “I was very angry, and if steam could come out of my nose and ears, it probably could [sic]” (p. 330). They also discovered that middle class White American teaching interns were unprepared for the conflagration of emotions experienced in a predominantly African American inner-city school -- including anger and yelling, as well as love and caring -- as being “more emotional than what they had been taught was effective in their university-based training” (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, pp. 342-343). The researchers also pointed out that there is “surprisingly little research related to classroom management and discipline,” causes of many of the negative emotions teachers experienced, pointing out the absence of even a chapter on classroom management in Richardson’s (2001) *Handbook on Research and Teaching* (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 343). While all teachers experienced similar emotions of joy, caring, anger, and frustration, these emotional responses varied according to the teachers’ cultural background as compared to their students, with more negative emotions emerging as cultural difference increased (pp. 350-351). This example illustrates the important role emotion plays in the work of teaching, particularly as it shapes teachers’ perceptions and understandings of their work and informs their identities.

One of the most prolific researchers in the area of teaching as an emotional practice, Hargreaves (1998) argued that emotions represent the “dynamic parts of ourselves,” and as such, the emotional dimension is a core principle of teaching that is often overlooked in conversations about education (p. 835). He identified emotionality as a key component of effective teachers, arguing that teaching is “an emotional practice” that “involves significant emotional understanding and emotional labor” (Hargreaves,

1998, p. 850).

In his research, Hargreaves (1998) conducted a qualitative research study of 32 grade 7 and 8 Canadian teachers representing four school districts near Toronto. The teachers he included in the study were recommended by their administrators and identified as committed and effective master teachers. Each teacher was interviewed individually for a period of 1-2 hours about their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching during a time of educational reform. They were also asked to talk about how the demands of their work affected their lives outside of school.

With over 1000 pages of fully transcribed interviews, Hargreaves (1998) focused on analyzing how teachers spoke about their work as a means to subcategorize their talk into larger themes, including their “emotional relationships with students, parents, administrators and other colleagues, or emotional responses to changes in curriculum assessment, reporting, etc.” (pp. 841-842), which became the foundation for his further work delineating emotional geographies, which will be addressed later in this chapter. In discussing his findings, he admitted his inability to “claim that the emotional responses of the teachers in this study are typical of all teachers” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 842). With a pool of only 32 participants, this is not surprising. However, as he convincingly noted, “[the] findings do offer significant insights into the emotional experiences of teachers on the leading edge of particular kinds of change, and for the ways that educational change impacts on these relationships” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 842).

Like others writing after him (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Day et al., 2006; Darby, 2008; Lee & Yin, 2011), one of the problems Hargreaves identified is that much of the research about the emotional practice of teachers and teaching has been conducted abroad,

particularly in England and Australia. Perhaps this is due, as Sutton & Wheatley (2003) argued, to cultural perceptions in the United States about the role of emotions. Ultimately, though, this research is important because it advocates for a comprehensive view of teachers and their work, providing a solid foundation for this study focusing on how high school English teachers perceive and understand their work. The next section will discuss how sociocultural constructs of emotion, culture, power, and ideology contribute to how emotional understanding shapes teachers' identities as well as how emotional geographies define the perceptions and understandings of their work.

Emotion, Culture, Power, and Ideology

Like Barbalet (2002), Boler (1999) identified emotions as “notoriously difficult to define” (p. xix), yet she asserted that “philosophical psychology and philosophies of education often examine emotion’s role in relation to three different *domains*: cognitive, moral, and aesthetic,” recognizing that questions surrounding the role of emotions are centuries old. Instead of pursuing a thread of research along these lines, however, Boler (1999) took up the role of emotion as one “embedded in culture and ideology, as embodied and situated” (p. xix), reflecting a sociocultural and sociopolitical focus, similar to arguments forwarded by Vygotsky (1978, 1987) and Barbalet (2002).

To this end, Boler (1999) framed emotion as a complex construct that simultaneously recognizes the “sensational, or physiological: consisting of the actual feeling ... [and the] cognitive, or conceptual: shaped by our beliefs and perceptions” (p. xix). As such, her “conception of emotions ... resonates with cognitive accounts of emotion that understand emotions and cognition as inextricably linked” (Boler, 1999, p. xix). Further, she also argued for the value of “evaluative theories of emotion, which

understand emotions as moral evaluations or judgments, and thus central to our ethical reasoning” (Boler, 1999, p. xx).

Boler (1999) situated the understanding of emotion in terms of power relations, arguing for the development of “a theory of emotions and power” as a necessary step to “develop effective pedagogies” (p. 3). To that end, Boler advocated for a Feminist-Marxist perspective that allows one “to illuminate how emotions reflect particular historical, cultural, and social arrangements,” particularly “how different views of emotion and education reflect distinct social and political agendas” (Boler, 1999, p. 4). Viewing emotion through this lens, she noted, will “invite emotions as part of critical and ethical inquiry” (Boler, 1999, p. 23), a perspective that is absent from Western discourses regarding emotion. To that end, Boler (1999) wrote:

The relegation of emotions to the private sphere is inextricably intertwined with the simultaneous consignment of women to the private sphere, and the related neglect of women’s histories. Women’s work, which includes ‘emotional labor,’ is also consigned to the private sphere. Rarely do educational histories examine, for example, the daily lives and practices of the female majority of schoolteachers, or the experience of students subjected to educational discipline. Examples of emotion’s present-absence, the daily dynamics of teachers’ and students’ lives, and the myriad ways in which emotions constitute interpersonal dynamics and learning processes, are largely absent from historical representations. (p. 19)

One might ask whether areas such as classroom and relational dynamics, then, would be considered in entirely different lights if the prevailing power structure were a female-oriented one. By the same token, one might also ask if emotionality as applied to teaching would be a non-issue if teachers were predominantly male instead of female. In this way, Boler provided “a framework to analyze how emotions are an invisible presence in education, and how emotions are disciplined to maintain social control” (p. 22), similar to arguments presented by Giroux (1988a) much earlier. This literature is an essential

aspect of this proposed research about the role of emotion in how high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching, particularly given that the majority of them are female. In light of these perceptions, the next section will situate emotional understanding in the work of Dewey (1931) and Vygotsky (1987) as a means to understand Hargreaves' (2001) concept of emotional geographies.

Using Emotional Geographies to Define Teachers' Emotional Understanding

Dewey's *Philosophy and civilization* (1931) argued that the cognitive and affective domains exist in "equilibration" (p. 117), expressing a symbiotic relationship that also acknowledged the inherent complexity of emotional response. Dewey (1916) indicated that emotion is an important aspect of the learning process, as the act of teaching is a continuous process embedded in a combination of the reconstruction of experience and the generation of meaning, a semiotic understanding of meaning making. This theoretical perspective provides a venue for understanding the ways female high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching, as teaching is an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 1998). Further, Dewey (1931) argued that the process of creating meaning occurs through the "reciprocal play" of the cognitive and the emotional (p. 118), where experience is grounded in how people feel and what people think, validating the merit of the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the cognitive and affective domains while providing insight into how previously compartmentalized thinking about the roles of the cognitive and emotional domains should be reconsidered in favor of an integrated view that values the importance of the symbiosis of their relationship.

While Dewey revealed an understanding of the interplay between the cognitive

and affective domains, Vygotsky (1987) argued in support of the contribution of emotionality to basic human survival instincts, a key consideration when considering how teachers perceive and understand their work. Vygotsky (1987) described the role of emotion, “within the same structure as other mental processes” (p. 336). In his examination of the importance of emotion in survival, Vygotsky (1987) asserted the “theory of emotions and its development are unique” (p. 325). Vygotsky believed in the imperative of showing and recognizing emotion as a means for people to negotiate daily life, including ways to understand the interaction and negotiation of external and internal discourses that affect how teachers perceive and understand their work (see pp. 22-23). For Vygotsky, there was no separation based on the perceived type of emotion, only emotion and the external and internal elements that served to define it and create meaning from it. Whereas many of his contemporaries viewed emotion as something to be conquered by individuals in isolation, Vygotsky envisioned emotion as a continuous process, a semiotic process informed by social construction.

Hargreaves’ (2001) research represents a vital contribution to the literature addressing the role of emotion in teaching. In his qualitative research study, Hargreaves conducted hour-long interviews with 53 elementary and secondary teachers in Canada to understand the role of emotion in teaching, specifically looking at teachers’ perceptions and understandings of their social interactions as the basis for understanding their emotional responses. In defining emotional geographies, Hargreaves (2001) considered “the spatial and experimental patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other” (p. 1061). He maintained that

emotional geographies are culture-bound, subjective, and active representations of experience (pp. 1061 – 1062). The research draws upon Hargreaves’ work with teachers but extends the scope of emotionality to consider how issues of gender and social class contribute to the ways in which female high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching.

Hargreaves’ (2001) study identified five distinct emotional geographies that elicit emotional responses based on teachers’ interactions: sociocultural, moral, professional, physical, and political. He reasoned that having an understanding of the specific situations that create emotional responses would provide a framework for improving teacher efficacy. Although his research with emotional geographies was focused on teacher-parent interactions, I argue that Hargreaves’ framework established on the basis of this limited interaction is also a sound one for exploring how emotionality contributes to the ways female high school English teachers understand their work, particularly given that “the recurrent emotional experiences that people have in their respective occupations affect their identities and their relationships in distinctive ways” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1057). For teachers, there are many interfaces beyond those with parents that inform their workplace experiences, including, but not limited to, those with students, colleagues, and administrators.

Further, Hargreaves (2001) noted that his research is intended to function as a counter-discourse to cognitively based policy and administrative discourses that tend to ignore “teachers’ emotions and emotionality in personal, psychological, and individual terms” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1057). Current educational policy in Michigan favors a cognitive approach that focuses on teachers’ content area knowledge, primarily supported

through teacher candidate standardized testing and performance-based evaluations, neglecting any consideration of the many complex emotional transactions that also shape how teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching. This view is problematic, especially in our “culturally diverse, increasingly unequal, and rapidly changing world, [where] building strong, reciprocal partnerships with others to develop the depth of emotional understanding on which successful learning among and caring for all students depends has never been more necessary,” (Hargreaves, 1999, p. 1076).

The intent of this research was to explore how these areas of interaction absent from Hargreaves’ research, such as those with students, colleagues, administrators, curriculum, or instruction, might further contribute to the body of knowledge about how female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work. Because the work of investigating all five emotional geographies would be a daunting task in this venue, my study focused on two areas particularly salient for high school English teachers: sociocultural and professional geographies. The importance of studying the sociocultural geography stems from the reality that students and their families often belong to different cultures than their teachers, whether that be due to differences in social class or ethnocultural diversity (Delpit, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Similarly, the many professional relationships in which teachers engage daily (e.g., students, colleagues, administrators, curriculum), in addition to the specific teacher-parent relationship Hargreaves (2001) focused on, are also ripe for study with this particular group, as research supports the view that emotional understanding is one of the foundations of effective teaching. Specifically, as outlined in chapter 1, I am interested in exploring how the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies

contributes to female high school English teachers' identities and perceptions and understandings of their work. In sum, the implications of the study of female high school English teachers' emotional responses that occur in the many complex relationships in which they engage present a promising contribution to the field of English education in the preparation of new teachers, particularly as high school English teachers as a group specifically experience the greatest amount of attrition in the field (Scherff & Hahs-Vaughn, 2008). The next section will address how emotional transactions work to shape teacher identity.

Emotional Transactions Shape Teacher Identity

In "Interrogating 'teacher identity': Emotion, resistance, and self-formation," Zembylas (2003) drew on previous research in subjectivity and emotion to consider how teachers' identities are shaped by the interactions and transactions of emotion, conflict, and the recursive nature of the concept of self. Zembylas applied Foucault's concept of subjectivity as a means to go beyond psychologically- and sociologically-based views of emotion that focus on internal workings in order to embrace the realities of emotionality as a complex *product* of exterior transactions, presenting a viable means to understand how emotionality contributes to teachers' identities as well as their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching.

Zembylas' (2003) understanding of emotion is based on the assumptions that language shapes emotion and that power relationships shape how emotions are expressed. Like Boler (1999) and Hargreaves (2001), Zembylas (2003) placed "the focus of analysis of the self and one's experiences is the *discourse* of experience rather than the experience itself" (p. 113). Here, Zembylas (2003) suggested that if "teachers can become aware of

the diverse ways in which they perform their emotions, beliefs, energies, and the like” (p. 127) they can situate their professional selves and the emotions that accompany their work. To do this requires a sociocultural view of emotion and identity that “emphasizes the role language and culture play in constructing the experience of emotion” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 110), similar to the position Boler (1999) assumed. For Zembylas, “[e]motion and identity are social as much as they are individual” (p. 112), a concept reminiscent of Bourdieu’s (1984) *habitus* and seen in Barbalet’s (2002) work as well.

For this reason, defining what constitutes a teacher’s perceived self-identity is complex, because identity is situated in many areas (Gee, 2001). Alsup (2006) defined teachers’ understandings of their professional identities as encompassing “the cognitive, the emotional, the bodily, and the creative” (p. 14), a definition that acknowledges the intricacies of how teachers function both inside and outside of the classroom. Because “identity has been theorized as improvisational, metadiscursive, and hybrid” (Lewis & DelValle, 2009, p. 311), it is constantly being shaped by our experiences, both personal and professional, a generative and creative semiotic process that is shaped by economic and social structures (Lewis & Fabos, 2005). For the female high school English teacher who finds herself at the epicenter of testing and accountability as a result of national reform efforts in the United States that focus specifically on reading, writing, and grammar, the stakes are high and the risks great (Rex & Nelson, 2004; Alsup, 2006; Hancock & Scherff, 2010), embroiling these teachers in a battle they may have never anticipated as university students studying in colleges of education.

For the sake of understanding the complex and unique nature of identity formation, Zembylas (2003) defined the teacher-self as an autonomous being who

maintains individuality while simultaneously requiring interaction with others, including colleagues, students, parents, and administrators (p. 107). This teacher-self assumes a specific and consistent “teacher identity that serves as the repository of particular experiences in classrooms and schools, the site of thoughts, attitudes, emotions, beliefs, and values” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 107). But we would be remiss in separating an individual’s teacher identity from, for example, her personal identity, because our various identity formations are “a unique blend of personal values, beliefs, learnings, and dispositions” (Rex & Nelson, 2004, p. 1291) are interconnected.

Moreover, it is important to note that teacher identity is comprised of external influences combined with inner feeling that “constitute both the teacher-self and teacher emotions” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 120), demonstrating how teachers’ daily relationships and interactions affect how they perceive and understand their work. Given that the process of continuous construction and destruction of identity is fraught with emotions (Margolis, 1998), that high school English teachers experience the majority of pressure due to accountability and testing standards (Rex & Nelson, 2004; Alsup, 2006; Hancock & Scherff, 2010), and that high school English teachers are leaving the teaching profession in greater numbers than any other group (Scherff & Hahs-Vaughn, 2008), research regarding how emotionality affects the way high school English teachers perceive and understand their work is necessary. To this end, Hancock & Scherff (2010) identified 4520 full time English, composition, and language arts teachers, conducting a large-scale logistic regression analysis of NCES data to determine the factors leading to secondary English teacher attrition. In their study, they discovered five statistically significant factors that contributed to the attrition of these teachers, with all five connected to the

emotional responses that result from relational transactions that inform identity, specifically minority status, classroom experience, teacher apathy, peer support, and administrative support (Hancock & Scherff, 2010). These five statistically significant factors associated with teacher attrition identified in the research of Hancock & Scherff (2010) support the argument that “teacher emotion is embedded in school culture, ideology, and power relations” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 120).

In their article “The personal and professional selves of teachers: stable and unstable identities,” Day et al. (2006) considered a combination of existing research and the results of a four-year study of 300 teachers in 100 schools in England as the basis for examining the role of identity in both the personal and professional lives of teachers. They argued that an understanding of identity is essential when studying the impacts of education reform, making the connection that teachers must engage both their cognitive and emotional selves as the key to raising and sustaining teaching standards (Day et al., 2006, p. 601). Furthermore, they maintained that employing consideration of both cognitive and emotional domains are vital to understanding teachers’ work (Day et al., 2006, p. 602), while recognizing that one’s identity is both socially constructed and, as a result, in a constant state of flux (Day et al., 2006, p. 607). Day et al. (2006) identified “the experience and management of strong emotions” as a significant aspect of being a teacher (p. 612). As a result, they asserted that “[emotions] are the necessary link between the social structures in which teachers work and the ways they act,” and their study is essential to have a broad understanding of the effects of reform on teaching and learning (Day et al., 2006, p. 613).

Specifically focusing on teachers’ emotional reactions to education reform,

Hargreaves (2005) provided a survey, based on a study consisting of interviews with 50 Canadian elementary, middle, and high school teachers, that considered the role that emotion both inside and outside the school experience plays in teachers' lives and, ultimately, how these emotions affect their teaching at various stages (early, middle, and late) throughout their careers. One of Hargreaves' (2005) main assumptions was that not everyone responds to educational change in the same way. While he acknowledged differences that may be seen given "[t]eachers' gender, subject specialty, and personal orientations to change" (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 967), he also maintained that any combination of these factors could influence reaction. In the end, he concluded, "change and people's experience of it has organizational and sociological dimensions as well as developmental and psychological ones" (p. 981), an analysis that addresses the complexities inherent in any multi-faceted study that addresses emotion and the many factors that influence it as well as how individual perceptions and perspectives change over time.

There is no doubt that the present day focus on education reform and the effect of the change it has foisted on those responsible for the day-to-day task of educating affects teachers differently. Hargreaves (2005) defined emotional understanding through Denzin (1984), who suggests how it:

can be established through a number of means, including emotional 'infection' (spreading optimistic or pessimistic moods to others); vicarious emotional understandings (where we empathize with people's lives or predicaments through theatre or literature, for example); sharing emotional experience (as when families experience a wedding or bereavement); and by developing long-standing, close relationships to others. Without such relationships, teachers (indeed anyone) are prone to experience emotional understanding where they 'mistake their feelings for the feelings of the other'. (Denzin, 1984, p. 134, qtd. in Hargreaves, 2005, p. 968)

These factors, in turn, affect how “teachers view students’ emotions as extensions of their own, or they treat students’ emotions stereotypically” (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 968). Because these factors represent people’s daily interactions with others, one can easily apply the relational interaction between teachers and students to other interaction examples, such as those with parents, colleagues, and administrators.

Further, Hargreaves (2005) explained the concept of *emotional geographies* as “help[ing] us identify the supports for and the threats to the basic emotional bonds and understandings of schooling that arise from forms of distance or closeness in people’s interactions or relationships” (p. 968), and noted its implications for educational policy. *Emotional geographies* provide a tool for analyzing the complexities of these relationships, providing a framework for understanding the factors underlying emotional response as well their impact on relationships with others.

Darby (2008) argued that studying teachers’ emotions provides a vehicle for improving instruction as well as student achievement (p. 1160). She rationalized that if teachers’ emotional concerns are not addressed as reforms continue, then there is a strong possibility that the reforms “may not be carried out as intended at the classroom level” (Darby, 2008, p. 1161). In this ethnographic study of 19 teachers in Canada and the United Kingdom, Darby (2008) sought to analyze the emotions teachers experienced during a period of reform in order to understand how they would reconstruct their professional identities. Darby’s (2008) findings indicated that when teachers’ professional identities were challenged as a result of reform initiatives, the negative emotions they experienced, such as fear and intimidation, were not conducive to effective implementation of reforms. Further, she found one key to mitigating teachers’ emotions

in response to reform mandates lies in *how* those mandates to change are presented to them. Although teachers were initially hesitant to change, professional guidance and support increased their confidence, resulting in classroom success (Darby, 2008, pp. 1170 - 1171).

Similar to assertions in Hargreaves (1998), Sutton & Wheatley (2003), and Day et al. (2006), the rationale supporting Darby's (2008) research was that recognizing teachers' roles in implementing reform is key to positive change (p. 1161). To that end, the purpose of her study was to examine teachers' emotional responses during what she called *critical incidents*, essentially points that elicited substantial emotional responses from teachers working in the midst of externally mandated reforms (Darby, 2008, p. 1160). Though her qualitative research consisted of only 19 critical incident interviews, she cited myriad research that, combined with the results of the study, provided a substantial context for her discussion of the role teachers' emotions play in their professional understanding.

The perspectives through which educators view their emotional responses are based on a set of assumptions that are, in part, developed by culture and experience. Because of myriad similarities that exist in western cultures regarding education and social interaction, it is important that those in the west look to other cultures as a basis for comparison and contrast when addressing issues, like educational reform, that contribute to teacher attrition. Lee & Yin (2011) provided an eastern perspective regarding the role of teachers' emotions and issues of professional identity in response to Chinese curriculum reform. Their 3-year qualitative study in Mainland China consisted of 22 teachers in 3 schools who were interviewed for at least one hour each about the emotions

they experienced as they engaged in a nationally mandated curriculum reform. Lee & Yin (2011) contextualized their study in much of the previous research that focused on differentiating teachers' positive and negative emotions toward change and how those emotions affected their professional identities. In addition, they pointed out that "mandated large-scale changes imposed from outside schools can have both cognitive and emotional impacts on teachers, leaders, and others charged with accompanying change" (Lee & Yin, 2011, p. 26).

Overall, Lee & Yin's (2011) findings suggested that teachers experience a complexity of emotions when reforms are imposed on them (p. 31) and teachers' emotional concerns should be addressed proactively in order for educational change to occur positively (p. 42). Given the lack of substantial emotion research in the United States, Lee & Yin's (2011) research not only offers a global perspective, but, unlike the majority of research in this area that is situated in England, Canada, and Australia offering a western perspective, they address the same issues although through a unique cultural lens. Specifically, their work identified the importance of recognizing the role that cultural differences have on people's emotions (pp. 39-40). While there is no doubt that one's beliefs are situated in one's cultural sensibilities, and that individual responses will differ based on this, it is also interesting to note that no matter how different people are culturally, they can have very similar emotional responses.

While the majority of work in education and education reform has focused on cognitive areas of teaching, many researchers (Hargreaves, 1998; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Day et al., 2006; Darby, 2008; Lee & Yin 2011) have recognized that to address only the cognitive domain when analyzing curriculum, teaching methods, and general

educational success, omits an essential aspect of teachers and teaching. As this body of research has demonstrated, attending to the emotional needs of teachers results in a greater amount of success in the classroom, because as we understand the impact of external forces on teachers – whether they be students, colleagues, administrators, parents, or policy makers – then we are better able to be proactive with teachers, resulting in more positive educational outcomes. Given that positive educational outcomes are one of the primary goals of reform, then continued attention must be paid to this area.

Conclusion

Teaching is an emotional practice, yet much of the research about teaching does not acknowledge this primary purpose (Hargreaves, 1998). The purpose of this chapter was to argue for the validity and necessity of researching how sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to high school teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, as well as how they shape teachers' professional identities. First, I situated the proposal in social constructionism, then I made a case for emotion as a viable means to understand teachers' perceptions and understandings of their work and professional identities. This research views these areas through critical inquiry, using the lenses of gender and class as a means of understanding these relationships.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

In this chapter, I will describe the methods used to conduct this social constructionist qualitative research study that sought to examine the ways in which sociocultural and professional emotional geographies (Hargreaves, 2001) contribute to high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, as well as how these geographies contribute to the shaping of their professional identities. This study was based on interviewing three distinct groups of high school English teachers guided by Anyon's (1980, 1981) categorization of school types based on social class (working class, middle class, and affluent class). Recruitment schools were determined by a combination of state school transparency data, required to be posted to each school's website, as well as school and community demographic information from the United States Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics' *School District Demographics System (SDDS)*. The researcher incorporated a deductive approach to data analysis to facilitate the grouping of the data, allowing for the analysis of similarities and differences. To that end, I analyzed to discern essential themes and recurring patterns by using constant-comparative methods of analysis (Charmaz, 2006), which resulted in creating a taxonomical structure from this data (McCurdy, et al., 2005). Further, I employed descriptive case study (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003) and mini- and cross-case (Yin, 2003) analysis methods in order to explore the ways in which high school English teachers perceive and understand their work across focus group data and individual interview data.

More specifically, to learn about the perceptions and understandings high school English teachers have about the work of teaching, my study utilized an initial survey, a series of three semi-structured focus group interviews, followed by individual interviews with one teacher selected from each focus group. Both the focus group interviews and individual interviews were conducted in public library conference rooms, with the interview sites selected according to proximity to the teachers' home addresses, to facilitate convenience for study participants. Further, this study used multiple data sources, including: teachers' survey responses, audio transcripts from three semi-structured focus group interviews, a researcher's reflective journal, and three individual interview audio transcripts as data sources. The purpose and rationale for site selection, focus group interviews, and individual interviews will be detailed later in this chapter.

As stated above, the purpose of this research was to examine how female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work, particularly in an age of education reform where teacher attrition, especially among those who teach English, is increasing (Scherff & Hahs-Vaughn, 2008). As such, the study used Hargreaves' (2001) concept of emotional geographies, focusing specifically on the sociocultural and professional geographies, to elicit data through both group and individual interviews that revealed teachers' perceptions and understandings about teaching. It took into consideration the complexities of experience and knowledge that shape each teacher's professional identity formation through the unique transactions in and around the work of teaching, a socially constructed act (Crotty, 1998).

This research also explored how the discourses of gender and class contribute to the process or processes by which emotionality is socially constructed. Data analysis was

guided by a sociocultural understanding of language, which understands that an individual is conversant in multiple discourses that, as a whole, serve to comprise identity (Gee, 1999/2008). The analysis of teachers' discourses focused on textual analysis of group and individual interview transcripts (Fairclough, 2003; van Leeuwen, 2008; Gee, 2011), looking for emerging patterns and themes within and across the texts, something that will be addressed more specifically later in this chapter.

The goal of the study was to answer two questions:

1. In what ways does the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching?
2. How do the interrelated discourses of gender and class inform emotional geographies and shape female high school English teachers' understanding of their professional identities?

In sum, this chapter will discuss and provide support for the study's methodology, research process, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques. In addition, I include a final section addressing my research ethics and statement of trustworthiness.

Using Ethnographic Methodologies

At the heart of teaching and learning are many disparate social interactions of the members of the educational community: the continual negotiation among teachers, students, parents, administrators, and other individuals and/or groups. Due to the complex nature of these interactions and the study's purpose, which sought to examine ways in which high school English teachers perceive and understand the work of teaching, the research was based on ethnographic methodologies. Because

“[e]thnography attempts to understand social and cultural phenomena from the perspective of participants in the social setting under study” (Bogdan & Biklin, 2007, p. 31), ethnographic research methodologies focus on the examination of culture, and researchers are charged with interpreting the many complex interactions that occur within particular cultures. In the case of high school English teachers, this includes areas such as how they perceive and understand their work, as well as how their perceptions and understandings shape their professional identities.

The function of using ethnographic methodologies as a research focus is particularly important for any study that seeks to document or portray “the everyday experiences of individuals by observing and interviewing them and relevant others,” as it attempts to create a holistic understanding of the study group by understanding its cultures, perspectives, and contexts (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, pp. 501 - 504). The interview process allows for a holistic understanding to emerge in ethnographic research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 501). Riessman (1996) maintained that “nature and the world do not tell stories, individuals do” and considered individual experiences as unique representations (p. 2) in a world where “meaning is fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal” (p. 15).

As a result, information drawn from this research involving individual high school English teachers cannot be applied broadly without acknowledging that many truths may emerge based on the unique circumstances and multiple realities of individuals. For this reason, the study was constructed to allow for the use of broad information elicited from high school English teachers in the initial survey as the basis for eliciting more specific information, first through focus group interviews and then continuing to pointed

individual interviews, which themselves function as specific case studies representing high school English teachers' perspectives and understandings of the profession as seen through the lens of the socioeconomic class of the teacher's home school.

Researchers are able to use individual perspectives, or truths, to look for larger trends or common connections that emerge from research data. Ethnographic methodologies allow researchers access to a complex array of information, where the goal is not to weigh judgment, but "to understand the informants' world and to determine how and with what criteria they judge it," (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 245). The rich perspective that results is one where the research represents the collection of data while understanding its meaning is mediated through the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). One of the strengths of utilizing ethnographic research methodologies is that they offer researchers the opportunity to unveil subtleties that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

As described in above, three teachers were selected from the focus group participants for further inquiry in order to elicit more detailed narratives about their experiences. One teacher was selected from each focus group, so none of the individual interview participants were in a focus group together. Similarly, the three teachers chosen for the individual interview worked at different high schools. This ensured that each individual interview was unique in its representation.

The selection of these individuals for case study represented a typical sample, "one that is considered or judged to be typical or representative of that which is being studied," (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 431). The benefit of using a typical sample is that it supports the researcher in making generalizations that can be broadly applied by facilitating the creation of a vivid image of a typical female high school English teacher

(Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 432), which can be used to gain insight into the shared experience of other female high school English teachers while also acknowledging any differences that may emerge based on the social class of the school the teacher represents.

Further, of the three types of case study Stake (1995) identified (intrinsic, instrumental, and multiple), this study embraces the multiple case study, which allowed me to study the experiences of high school English teachers from three distinct schools, enabling the cultivation of thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to understand how their schools of origin may influence how their sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, as well as how they shape their professional identities. The advantage of this approach was that eliciting information from three individuals, as opposed to one, produced data that are “more compelling and more likely to lend themselves to valid generalization,” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

Role of the Researcher

Because qualitative inquiry situates the researcher as the instrument through which data are mediated, it is important to understand the researcher’s background, motivations, and qualifications to maintain credibility in the research process (Patton, 2002). I enter the process as a 46 year-old middle-class white woman who is in her 18th year of public education employment. For the first 15 years, I worked as a high school English teacher in an outer ring suburb of a large Midwestern city, where I was recruited to the school district due to my training and experiences with urban diversity, a result of the teacher education program I attended at an urban university. One of the goals I had when I accepted employment was to broaden the perspectives of my white suburban

students, many of whom had never seen a large city or experienced people who were different than they. The power of literature had expanded my own horizons as a youth, and my youthful idealism wanted to facilitate that experience for my students. My idealism was very quickly challenged by a student, then his parents, then my supervising administrator. Although I had the knowledge and the passion to teach, I found myself conflicted about the ever-changing parameters of the work of teaching I had to negotiate, whether that was with students, parents, colleagues, or administrators.

At the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, I left the high school English classroom and began a quasi-administrative position (administrative duties while receiving teacher salary) in the same high school. As Dean of Students, I primarily work with students regarding issues of attendance, though there is a curriculum component to my job description, where I support instructional staff with curriculum implementation, lesson planning, and overall best practices in teaching. Because this research focused on understanding how sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, my experiences both in and out of the classroom provided me with some insight into this matter. At the same time, because each teacher engages in unique social transactions, there is much to learn from others' experiences, as well as the similarities and differences that appear across individual experience.

While the researcher's act of participation can vary along a continuum that ranges from absolute immersion to absolute separation (Patton, 2002), as a former high school English teacher, I have engaged in work similar to that of the research participants, who were all high school English teachers. Now that I am not a high school English teacher, I

am one step removed from the experience of the research participants, creating a distinct separation from their experience as I conducted this research. Because I interviewed three groups of teachers from three distinct schools with which I was not familiar, I had no understanding of each school's unique culture, in many ways making me an outsider. The connections I did have with the participants were based on having worked as a teacher who has interacted with many different partner groups. Similarly, when I conducted the three personal interviews after the initial focus group interviews, my primary role was as an interviewer who then reflected on my observations in a researcher's journal. Because of my previous work as a high school English teacher, I was able to ask questions and probe further into teachers' responses informed by my own experience, allowing for a rich insight into teachers' contexts, relationships, and behaviors. At the same time, I had to be mindful to be objective in my observations and let the data speak.

Researcher Bias

Given that qualitative research risks the potential for researcher bias more than other forms of research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), this section will discuss potential biases I have identified. First, I will discuss areas of personal bias that could have affected the gathering of data, and then I will discuss issues of data collector bias that address data handling techniques and procedures.

To begin, there are multiple biases to keep in mind as a researcher that could affect results, including: gender, age, ethnicity, language patterns, or other personal characteristics of the research participants (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Because gender and class were the two primary lenses this study used to understand how emotionality

contributes to high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, statistics indicate – and research confirmed -- many of the research participants shared my gender, ethnicity, and social class (United States Census, 2008), requiring a persistent cognizance of my role as an objective researcher.

In addition to areas of personal bias that may exist, there was also the issue of data collector bias regarding data handling techniques and procedures. CITI training in data collection was one key to understanding sound technique and procedure, which I completed prior to beginning the research study. In addition, it was also necessary to standardize all procedures, including surveys, interview questions, and protocols so that every participant was exposed to the same information, ensuring a similar experience during the research process (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). To ensure this was the case, all research participants took the same online survey (Appendix E), were asked the same focus group questions (Appendix F), and were asked the same individual interview questions (Appendix G). The only difference in questioning that emerged from the focus group interviews and individual interviews was when I asked probing questions to elicit more in depth response or to elicit clarification of response, part of the semi-structured interview format.

Another area of research bias concern was in the wording and word choice of the survey questions and interview questions (both focus group and individual), as well as that of the follow-up questions during the interview sessions. Because I shared a similar professional background with the research participants, I was careful not to impose my opinion when creating the initial questions, while asking follow-up questions during interviews, or otherwise interacting with the participants. It was important to eliminate

any questions or prompts that might inadvertently (or advertently) lead the research participants to respond in a particular way (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The idea was to provide a bank of transcript data free from collector bias, affording the researcher the consistency from interview to interview to mine the data that emerged from the study.

The following sections will present specific information about the research process of this study. First, I will begin with a description of the sites for research, followed by a description of the participants, the duration of involvement, and the timeline for the study.

Site Selection

For this study, I conducted research with English teachers from three public high schools, each representing one of the three distinct social classes (working class, middle class, and affluent class) as defined by Anyon's (1980, 1981) seminal study. To ensure a consistent and large pool of potential participants from each school, I focused on schools with a minimum student enrollment of 1200. The reason for this choice was predicated on the idea that State of Michigan High School Merit Curriculum specifies that high school students must take four credits of English for each the four years they are in high school. As a result, high schools with greater student enrollment employ a higher number of English teachers, providing an optimal environment for recruiting the greatest number of research participants. To that end, I selected three schools that fit the criteria (explained further in the next paragraph) for size and social class, as determined by demographic data from the National Center for Education Statistics in combination with informal conversations I had with the principals of the targeted schools who were amenable to providing access to their English teachers for the study. Prior to receiving

principal approval, I explained to the principals that they would not have access to the resulting data, including the teachers' interview transcripts and survey results (Appendix A and Appendix B). Further, the principals understood that they would not know which teachers participated in the study (Appendix A and Appendix B).

Based on Anyon's (1980, 1981) criteria, I used a combination of resources to select each school, including: state mandated transparency reporting as reported on school websites, United States Census (2010) data, as well as community and district information from the National Center for Education Statistics' *School District Demographics System (SDDS)* representing the 2013-14 school year, the most recent information available. I defined each of the three social classes according to United States Census (2010) information based on household earnings for a family of four, with working class families earning less than \$35,000 annually, middle class families earning between \$35,000 - \$100,000 annually, and affluent class families earning more than \$100,000 annually. These financial criteria, as ascertained from demographic data, served to identify the predominant social class constituting the *community* representing each school, though they were not applied to identify the social classes represented by the *teachers* working in the schools. The three schools chosen for participant recruitment are located within 25 miles of a large, industrial, upper-Midwestern city and all are classified as large suburban schools according to SDDS data from the 2013-14 school year. I briefly describe each school below.

Working Class School.

Working Class High School (WCHS) is a large suburban high school situated in a working class community with family income averaging about \$32,000 per year. Nearly

2/3 of students at the school, representing about 63%, receive free or reduced lunch. The school's total enrollment, according to data from the 2013-14 school year, is about 1600 students.

Middle Class School.

Middle Class High School (MCHS) is also categorized as a large suburban high school. The school is located in a community that has an average family income of about \$67,000 per year. About $\frac{1}{4}$ of the students at the school, representing 26%, receive free or reduced lunch. The school's total enrollment, according to data from the 2013-14 school year, is about 1800 students.

Affluent Class School.

Similar to WCHS and MCHS, Affluent Class High School (ACHS) is also categorized as a large suburban high school. The school is located in an affluent community that has an average family income of \$152,000 per year. Unlike the working and middle class schools, ACHS has a relatively small amount of students who receive free or reduced lunch, about 5%. According to 2013-14 data from the NCES, ACHS has a total enrollment of approximately 1300 students.

Because this research focused on teachers' perceptions and understandings of their work, it is tangential to their classroom experience. According to LeCompte & Schensul (1999), this strategy is called criterion-based selection, where the research sites "possess characteristics that match those of interest to the researcher" (p. 113). The next section will include specifics regarding the study's individual participant selection and recruitment.

Participant Description and Recruitment

The participants for this study were considered for selection based on their content-area focus – all were current female English teachers in some capacity – and school of employment, as described above (pp. 72-73). To gain permission to access teachers at each of the three schools, I directly contacted each principal by both email and telephone. After this initial contact, I provided each principal with a letter (Appendix A) and information sheet (Appendix B) that described the study, as well as a copy of the survey (Appendix E) teachers were asked to complete. Once I received the principals' written permission for access to the high school English teaching staff, I began a three-step data gathering process that included conducting a general survey, three focus group interviews, and three individual interviews.

Due to the size of the English staff at each high school, I had planned on contacting all of the female teachers in the school's English department. What I had not anticipated was not being able to identify gender according to the teacher's first name. As a result of this unexpected hurdle, I decided to send the information about the study to every English teacher in the three high schools. Because one of the survey items asked participants to identify themselves by gender, I was able to screen for gender after the initial phase of data collection, the survey. Interestingly, the gender of the survey respondents mirrored the gender representation in the profession, something I will discuss further in Chapter 4.

Given the target size of a minimum of 1200 students at each school and my experience as a former high school English teacher and department head in determining staffing quotas, the total number of English teachers I contacted via email to explain the

study and seek participation was consistent with the 30-60 teachers (the range is so large because it also considered part time English teachers and special education English teachers) I had anticipated there would be. In the end, I contacted 54 teachers in the initial email query process, representing all English teachers at each high school. In the email prospective teacher participants received (Appendix C), I also included a link to the survey (Appendix E), whose first page included a description of the study and consent to participate (Appendix D), as well as incentive information that teachers who decided to participate in the survey would receive a \$5 gift card to Amazon.com. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete, and teachers were asked to complete the survey within one week of receiving the email query. Teachers who agreed to participate in this initial round of data gathering were informed that the information they provided would be seen only by the researcher, and, further, that their consent to participate in the survey would not require further participation beyond taking the survey. This represents what Patton (2002) called purposeful selection, a process where participants were “selected *purposefully* to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon *in depth*,” (p. 46). The goal in using purposeful sampling was to have a pool of female high school English teachers from which to select information-rich cases for study in depth (Patton, 2002, p. 46). This allows the researcher to mine complex information from fewer individuals as opposed to using standardized information from a larger sample, creating a thick description in order to create external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The purpose of the survey was to gather initial information about teachers’ perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, including, but not limited to: reasons for choosing teaching as an occupation; duration of teaching experience;

perceptions of students, parents, colleagues, and administrators; and views about issues of curriculum and instruction. At the end of the survey, teachers had the opportunity to indicate their interest in participating in the next stage of the study, the focus group interview. This end of survey notification informed prospective stage two focus group interview participants that they would receive a \$25 gift card if chosen to participate in the focus group interview. Participants who chose not to continue were thanked for their time on a final survey screen and were taken to a unique screen where they entered their contact information to receive the \$5 gift card. Those who indicated an interest in being part of the focus group interview, in response to a yes or no question on the screen, were taken to a different screen where they entered their contact information in order to receive the \$5 gift card and be contacted for the focus group interview.

Based on the participant interest indicated at the end of the survey, my initial hope was to have at least 4-6 teachers from each type of high school willing to participate in the next stage of the research, the focus group interview. According to Schensul, et al. (1999), 4-6 people is an ideal number for focus group interviews to facilitate group interaction while offering extensive data for analysis. As I will explain further below, I was able to secure a total of 12 teachers to participate in the focus group interviews. While this number was at the lower range of what I would have hoped, it was nevertheless sufficient to conduct the three focus group interviews.

Teachers who agreed to participate in a focus group interview did so with the understanding that the focus group interview would last between 60-90 minutes, would be scheduled during non-work hours off school grounds at a local public library, and would result in compensation in the form of a \$25 Visa gift card at the conclusion of the

interview. The focus group interview questions (Appendix C) asked about teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, including those pertaining to curriculum, instruction, and interactions with students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and others tangential to teaching.

At the end of the focus group interview, teachers were given a notecard on which to indicate their interest in participating in the last phase of the study, a 60-90 minute individual interview. Teachers were informed that the individual interview would be scheduled at a date and time convenient to the teacher, be held in a private room at a local public library, and that there would be additional compensation in the form of a \$50 Visa gift card upon completion of the interview. Those who indicated *yes* had a place on the card to indicate their contact information (email address and telephone number), while those who did not wish to be considered for a personal interview merely indicated *no*.

I explained to teachers that the selection for the individual interviews would be made in light of the study's research questions and would represent a typical sample based on outcomes of the focus group interviews. Those not chosen, but who expressed an interest in participating in the individual interview, were informed via email that they were not selected for the final stage of the research process. Included in the initial consent prior to the survey, part of the consent process was that the teacher must agree that she would not reveal the identity of any focus group interview or individual interview participants, including her own, to ensure confidentiality. There were a total of three teachers chosen for an individual interview, one from each high school. The purpose of the individual interview was to elicit narratives and reflections of teachers' experiences in

greater depth than was possible during the focus group interview. The next section outlines the duration and timeline of the study.

Duration and Timeline of the Study

The study was conducted from June 2015 through August 2015. Prior to making initial contact with potential research participants, I identified each of the three school sites based on the criteria discussed on pp. 72-73, and communicated and received permission from each principal to gain access to English department faculty at each school site.

After initial contact with teachers and completion of the survey in June 2015, I conducted focus group interviews and individual interviews during the months of July 2015 and August 2015. The timeline for the study is included in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Duration	Research Process
Pre-Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified schools for selection using demographic data Contacted principals at each school to secure permission to contact English teachers
Weeks 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified English teachers at each school via the school's principal and the school's website Opened the survey Initiated email contact with English teachers that included a description and information about the study, as well as a live web link for those interested in taking the survey
Weeks 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sent \$5 gift cards to all survey participants Contacted teachers interested in participating in a focus group interview Scheduled focus group interviews Aggregated survey data
Weeks 5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted focus group interviews Transcribed focus group interviews Conducted preliminary analysis of focus group

	interview data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacted teachers interested in participating in an individual interview to schedule interviews
Weeks 8-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted individual interviews including member checks based on focus group interview data • Transcribed individual interviews • Conducted preliminary analysis of individual interview data
Weeks 11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued analysis of data, focusing on patterns emerging between survey, focus group interview, and individual interview data

Data Collection

In this section, I will discuss the data collection techniques I used in this qualitative research study. The study's research data sources included: a researcher reflective journal, survey results, focus group interview transcripts based on digital audio recordings, and individual interview transcripts based on digital audio recordings.

Researcher Reflective Journal.

To triangulate the data that emerged from the elicitation techniques described above, I made extensive use of a researcher's journal. The researcher's journal served to record my observations, insights, and questions during the process of collecting and reflecting on the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Information written in the researcher's journal was both descriptive and reflective in nature. Its purpose was to capture my thoughts and questions about the data collection process, as well as a place to document ideas and concerns that emerged from the focus group interviews and individual interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Survey.

Because "[e]thnography attempts to understand social and cultural phenomena from the perspective of participants," creating and using survey information allows

researchers to “transform exploratory and semi-structured data into instruments that measure relationships among cultural domains and variables” (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p. 165). Further, this process provides researchers the opportunity to collect information as well as to examine the relationships that emerge from the collected data, providing a means to “gain validity and reliability from prior investigation in the local setting” (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, pp. 167-169).

The survey was completed by a total of 37 participants, falling within the 30-45 teachers I had hoped would participate in the study. As part of this process, I used the preliminary information gathered from the survey as a means to identify teacher demographic information, support an initial analysis of teachers’ perceptions and understandings of their work, and to recruit teachers who were interested in participating in the next phase of the study, a focus group. The survey data from all teachers was considered in aggregate form for purposes of analysis.

Further, the analysis of the survey responses also informed some of the questions created for the focus group interviews and also facilitated the collection of demographic information about participants prior to the focus group interview (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 78). Although 19 of 37 survey participants expressed interest in participating in a focus group, due to lack of availability and scheduling conflicts only 12 teachers who participated in the survey participated in a focus group. In the next section, I will discuss the focus group interviews and participants more specifically.

Focus Group Interviews.

According to Schensul et al. (1999), focus group interviews provide a number of advantages for researchers, including:

generat[ing] a considerable quantity of data in a relatively short period from a larger number of people ...; allow[ing] the researcher to record and analyze group members' reactions to ideas and to each other; [and producing] useful 'natural language discourse' ... in a rapid and concise manner. (pp. 52 – 56)

I conducted a total of three focus group interviews. Initially, my plan was that each focus group would represent a different high school, with one focus group interview from each social demographic (working class, middle class, and affluent class). The thinking behind this was that conducting focus group interviews with teachers from the same school would be an advantage because it would create a comfortable environment for the teachers in which they were more likely to share the experiences of their day-to-day work, such as curriculum requirements, administrative expectations, community values, and student population. On the other hand, a distinct disadvantage of this approach could include hesitation to voice opinions about work situations in the presence of co-workers who may think differently of them due to their comments.

In the end, I was logistically unable to schedule focus group participants in homogenous school groups due to conflicts with the teachers' schedules and availability. This was discovered when I sent a focus group scheduling preference survey to research participants who had expressed an interest in participating in the focus group phase of the study. As a result, I was able to schedule three distinct focus groups, but the participants in each of the three focus groups represented a mix of teachers from each of the three school types: working class, middle class, and affluent class. Next, I will further discuss the composition of the focus groups.

Initially, I proposed including 4-6 teachers in each focus group for several reasons. First, this represents a number that facilitates good interaction while giving each group member quality opportunities to interact (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011). Focus groups

that contain too many members are problematic by possibly limiting the amount of time each member may participate, which, in turn, limits the amount of rich data produced, particularly in a 60-90 minute interview (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011). Because this format elicits rich information rapidly and concisely (Schensul, et al, 1999), attention to balance in selection and not trading quantity for quality was important (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011). While the focus group interview is a method of collecting research through group discussions and is based on the participants' perceptions and experiences, its main focus is the interaction among the participants (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011).

Due to the scheduling difficulties explained above, I was able to conduct three focus groups with each containing a mix of teachers from the three schools. While I had originally planned on having 4-6 teachers in each focus group, several last minute issues that arose with participants altered the plan. In the end, there were 5 teachers in the first focus group, 4 teachers in the second, and 3 teachers in the third (one teacher from group three forgot about a previous obligation and asked to participate on a different day, which put her in the first group). While the third focus group did not represent the ideal range as defined by Carlsen & Glenton (2011), each group did contain at least one teacher from each school, resulting in a rich environment for conversation, and the total number of desired focus group participants was achieved.

All focus group interviews were recorded with a digital audio recording device to provide an audio representation of the interviews that supported the "understanding of the complexity of a situation or the sequence of actions or events," (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, p. 7). The use of audio was instrumental in guiding the interpretation of events, as it allowed for an unlimited review of the information while providing an

accurate basis for reflection. Moreover, the information from each focus group interview transcript informed the questions for the individual interviews and facilitated information for member checks during the individual interviews.

Individual Interviews.

According to Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte (1999), semi-structured interviews allow “the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data at the factor level” (p. 149). To this end, questions devised for the semi-structured interview are “preformulated, but the answers to those questions are open-ended,” enabling the interviewer to further probe the participant’s responses (p. 149).

The preparation for the three individual interviews emerged from several places: the analysis of the initial survey data, the researcher’s reflective journal, and the transcripts from the focus group interviews. The selection of the three teachers for the individual interview was based on several factors. First, the teacher had to express an interest in participating in an individual interview following participation in the focus group interview (of the 12 teachers who participated in the focus groups, a total of 8 teachers expressed interest in the individual interview). Second, each of the three teachers had to represent one of the distinct schools, with no more than one teacher from the working class school, one from the middle class school, and one from the affluent class school. Third, each one of the teachers selected needed to be able to provide a rich perspective and understanding of the profession, a decision I made based on the quality and depth of their responses during the focus groups.

Each individual interview lasted for 60-90 minutes, with the affluent class teacher interview lasting for 65 minutes, the middle class interview lasting 80 minutes, and the working class interview lasting almost 90 minutes. The length of each individual interview was interesting because I asked the same questions, but initial analysis of the interview transcripts reveal more direct and specific language being used by the affluent class teacher, thus shortening response time, and wordier responses by the working class teacher, whose interview was the longest. During the individual interviews, I asked questions based on data that emerged from my researcher's journal and focus group interview transcripts that served as individual member checks, a strategy suggested by Lincoln & Guba (1985), in order to validate the information, which I discuss in the next section.

Member Checks.

Based on the data and trends that emerged from the initial survey and group interviews, I conducted member checks both during the focus groups and the individual interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in order to validate information, triangulate the data for robustness, and strengthen the study's credibility. Member checks were conducted by identifying issues for clarification or specification identified by the researcher that emerged from the data, as well as through observing participants' responses, whether agreement or disagreement, with others (Shenton, 2004). In this way, member checks were conducted within the three focus groups containing 12 participants as well as during each of the three individual interviews. The purpose for conducting member checks on these two levels was to broaden the number of participants for member checking. Originally, I had planned to conduct member checks with only the individual interview

participants, but the limitations of drawing on 3 individuals versus 12 was a factor in changing this focus. In addition to verifying my thinking, the use of member checks also provided the opportunity to contextualize emergent meaning in a timely manner (Shenton, 2004).

Data Analysis

The process of analyzing the data that emerged from the three phases of the study was continuous throughout the 12 weeks of the study. Beginning with the initial survey, I read and re-read the data, recording my observations and questions. This process of analyzing the research data for emergent themes and trends in my researcher's notebook was ongoing as I transitioned from the survey to conducting the focus groups and the individual interviews.

The data culled from the three phases of the study (survey, focus groups, and individual interviews) as well as my observations and questions represented in the researcher's reflective journal were then grouped into semantic domains to organize for patterns of sameness of meanings. To do this, I first utilized a memo writing process as a means to cultivate and categorize the data to identify larger relationships and themes (Maxwell, 2005; Charmaz, 2006). Memos were written as part of the recursive process of data analysis (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999), where I would continually move from the observations and questions recorded in the researcher's journal back to the initial survey data and interview transcripts, creating ever-deepening layers of analysis based on multiple readings of the data.

According to McCurdy et al. (2005), the first task of this type of analysis is to "discover[] taxonomic structure" (p. 43) in order to understand and view relationships

that emerge into a format that allows the researcher to make sense of this vast amount of resulting information (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 147). To this end, I created taxonomies based on the domains, or “categories that categorize other categories” (McCurdy et al., 2005, p. 44), that emerged from textual analysis of the collected data. In analyzing the raw data, I was looking for relationships of meaning (McCurdy et al., 2005, p. 46) that connected to each research question.

Coding the data.

After the initial grouping of the emergent data into specific categories based on the many internal and external interactions in which teachers engaged using a constant-comparative method (Charmaz, 2006), I then began to code the data. Charmaz (2006) identified coding as “the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (p. 46). The process of coding allows researchers to “define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46).

Following Charmaz’s (2006) two-step process of coding, I began the coding process with:

- 1) an initial phase involving naming each word, line, or segment of data followed by 2) a focused, selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data. (p. 46)

For the initial phase of coding, I organized the data line by line, which Charmaz (2006) defined as being well suited for research consisting of interviews and observations (p. 50). First, I focused on color-coding each research participant, who had previously been identified by a random number and letter combination, according to the socioeconomic class of the teachers’ school of employment. Once I had done this, I used emergent data

that presented a variety of teacher interactions to then define and categorize those interactions, using a different color code to represent each type of interaction. Following these categorizations, I dug into the data further to identify the most significant features that emerged within each category, focusing on the frequency of words and phrases as they applied to each category. Next, I will discuss how I used a process of discourse analysis to understand the coded data.

Discourse Analysis.

The heart of this study lies in the analysis of the teachers' language in an attempt to uncover how high school English teachers perceive and understand their work and how those perceptions and understandings contribute to the shaping of their professional identities. Language -- and the many discourses that comprise it -- becomes important as the basis for understanding. Fairclough (2001) maintained that discourse analysis allows researchers to analyze "the significance of language in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power" as well as language's ability "to help increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others" (p. 1). Discourse analysis allows the opportunity for researchers to consider "all the assumptions and information speakers leave unsaid" in order to "begin consciously to think about all the knowledge, assumptions, and inferences we bring to any communication" (Gee, 2011b, p. 8).

Further, Temple-Adger (2008) explained the benefits of studying the language present in educational settings as a means of furthering our knowledge of the field, particularly because language embeds assumptions about the hierarchies of -- and struggles for -- power (Fairclough, 2001). The benefits of analyzing language as a tool in

the study of how high school English teachers perceive and understand their work are promising. Language analysis can offer researchers a window into understanding function beneath the surface of visibility.

I utilized a process of discourse analysis to understand the language from the focus group and individual interview transcripts after the initial coding and categorization of the themes and patterns that emerged from the data. In previous research, discourse analysis has been used to understand various interactions, with a specific focus on talk (Potter, 1997). While there are many approaches to analyzing discourse (Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 2008; Shiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton, 2008; Van Leeuwen, 2008; Fairclough, 2009; Gee, 2011a & 2011b), the nature of the emerging themes I identified, particularly concerning the many internal and external interactions in which teachers engage, pointed me to Gee's (2011b) analytic relationship building tool as a means to think about how relationships inform identity (pp. 114-118).

This tool was appropriate because it assumes that "the identity we construct for ourselves in any context is often defined, in part, by how we see and construe our relationship with other people, social groups, cultures, or institutions" (Gee, 2011b, p. 114). Incorporating it, my thinking was guided by the following questions: *How is the teacher's language building, constructing, or construing the types of relationships she has with other people or institutions?* and *What sort of relationship does the teacher represent to those present and listening to her language?* (Gee, 2011b, p. 118) As I worked through the data with these questions in mind, I focused on the teachers' diction and interactions with each other to gain insight into how they perceived and understood the work of teaching.

Further, I used Gee's (2011b) framework to engage in a two-step process method of discourse analysis advocated by Titscher et al. (2005). The first step in this process consisted of using open coding as a means of "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Titscher et al, 2005, p. 79) that emerged from the preliminary coding described in the previous section (Charmaz, 2006). Next, I used a process of axial coding that allowed the researcher to create new relationships between concepts (Titscher et al., 2005, pp. 79-80). It was through the process of axial coding that I used the data to support the creation of categories and sub-categories that emerged from the survey, focus group, and individual interview data (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 5).

In the table below, I provide a summary of the data sources, purposes, collection processes, and analysis methods that were described previously in this chapter.

Table 2

Data Source	Purpose	Collection Process	Analysis Method
<i>Researcher Reflective Journal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document researcher observations, questions, and reflections during the research process • Analyze emerging themes and trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations, thoughts, and questions were included upon review of survey data, interview process, and transcripts • Journal was handwritten and kept in a locked cabinet in home office 	Journal was reviewed on a continual basis throughout the research process to analyze for emergent themes and trends that were then written in memos for further consideration
<i>Online Survey</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant demographic data • Initial perceptions and understandings • Recruit teachers 	Survey link was emailed to teachers upon principal approval at the beginning of the research period in June 2015,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey data was reviewed to elicit to aggregate general information about teachers

	for focus groups	requesting completion no later than one week after receiving email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey data was reviewed to determine participant interest, focusing on identifying by gender (female)
<i>Researcher Reflective Journal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document researcher observations, questions, and reflections during the research process Analyze emerging themes and trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations, thoughts, and questions were included upon review of survey data, interview process, and transcripts Journal was handwritten and kept in a locked cabinet in home office 	Journal was reviewed on a continual basis throughout the research process to analyze for emergent themes and trends that were then written in memos for further consideration
<i>Focus Group Interview</i>	To understand teachers' perceptions and understandings regarding their profession and work-based relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three 60-90 minute focus group interviews to be conducted in the first 7 weeks of the study, to be scheduled following participant survey completion Focus groups conducted at one of three locations based on teacher location; dates/times were mutually agreed upon with participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semantic domain analysis was used to analyze focus group interviews and organize for patterns of sameness and meaning Discourse analysis was used to analyze language, with specific focus on the social class of the teachers' schools as a means to understand similarities and differences based on place of work
<i>Individual Interview</i>	To explore teachers' backgrounds,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three distinct 60-90 minute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semantic domain analysis

	perceptions, and understandings as they apply to the work of teaching	<p>interviews were conducted in weeks 8-10 with teachers who expressed interest and fit researcher's criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews were conducted at three distinct locations based on participant location; dates/times mutually agreed upon with participants 	<p>was used to analyze transcripts and organize for patterns of sameness and meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourse analysis was used to analyze language, with specific focus on similarities and differences based on social class of place of work
<i>Member Checks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangulate for robustness Identify issues Provide clarification 	Based on identified themes and trends, focus group and individual interview participants were asked to organize or clarify ideas according to their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching.	Researcher will review the results of each member check to compare and contrast with emergent domains from both focus group interviews and individual interviews

Research Ethics and Trustworthiness

Issues of research ethics and trustworthiness are primary considerations when constructing a research study. In all studies involving research participants, the protection of those participants should be the primary consideration of the researcher. According to LeCompte & Schensul (1999), "All researchers are bound by codes of ethics to protect people whom they study against treatment that would be harmful to them," physically, mentally, or otherwise (p. 183). When researchers follow guidelines

of ethical research practice, they are able to produce results that have a solid basis for trustworthiness, the idea that “an inquirer [can] persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). My goal as a researcher, then, was to adhere to a rigid code of ethics in study design and inquiry in order to facilitate the trustworthiness of the results.

The primary concern of an ethical research practice is to ensure “that if risks do exist, the benefits of the study should outweigh the risk, and [that the] people incurring the risks should fully understand what the short- and long-term risks are and volunteer to incur them” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 183). This process began with the investigator thoroughly considering the nature of the research study, designing a study that considered all risk types (physical, psychological, social, economic, and legal) weighed against possible benefits, but also continued through study conception to implementation and then analysis. To this end, the university’s Internal Review Board, which approved this study, established policies and procedures to ensure this research study was ethically designed.

Trustworthiness is another essential component of quality research. Lincoln & Guba (1985) offer four questions to connect the idea of trustworthiness to a naturalistic paradigm appropriate for ethnographic research, based on the concepts of truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality, which they connect to the notions of internal/external validity, reliability, and objectivity in the conventional research paradigm (p. 290). By asking questions that address the importance of the researcher’s findings as well as anticipating potential arguments, criteria, and potential questions related to the research, researchers achieve trustworthiness.

Further, to ensure ethical conduct and trustworthiness in research, all research participants were fully informed via consent agreement before they were able to participate in the study. This consent was obtained before participants were able to participate in the first part of the study, the survey. The consent agreement informed possible participants that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study for any reason at any time. In addition, prospective participants were informed that their identities would be protected throughout the process, should they agree to participate. I coded all participant information using a random number letter system for focus group participants, while using pseudonyms that only I can identify for the individual interview participants. The only people who had access to the raw data from the study were the researcher and research supervisor. Data was stored on the researcher's password-protected laptop computer at home in addition to a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the framework, methodologies, and design of the research study. Situated in social constructionism, the study attempted to understand how Hargreaves' (2001) sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of teaching. The study was conducted using qualitative research methodologies and involved high school English teachers at three high schools. The schools were chosen based on Anyon's (1980, 1981) distinctions regarding social class as determined by local, state, and demographic data, with all interviews conducted off-site at public libraries. Permission to access teachers at each school site was granted through

the principal's approval. Data analysis of the survey, the researcher's reflective journal, and transcripts from focus group and individual interviews was first organized according to taxonomical structure to assist in discovering semantic relationships (McCurdy et al., 2005). Further, I used discourse analysis (Gee, 2011) as a means to understand the teachers' language. Lastly, this chapter discussed issues of ethics and trustworthiness, based on Lincoln & Guba's (1985) concepts of truth/value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Participants agreed via consent, which stated their involvement in the study was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time for any reason, with their identities kept confidential. All research participants were identified by random alpha-numeric coding (focus groups) or via pseudonym (individual interview). The data was accessible by only the researcher and research supervisor, and was stored on the researcher's password-protected laptop computer, with an additional print copy stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office.

CHAPTER 4: SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore how three distinct groups of female high school English teachers, chosen by purposeful sampling (see pp. 75 - 79) across three distinct types of schools, as defined by Anyon (1980, 1981), -- working class, middle class, and affluent class -- perceive and understand the work of teaching, as well as how those perceptions shape their professional identities. In studying teachers' perceptions of their work, my intent was to garner a nuanced understanding of the role of how emotionality contributes to teachers' identities.

The impetus for this study lies in traditional cognitive-based views that understand teachers and the work of teaching as being situated around the requisite knowledge of the content areas they teach, a view that dominates the education profession today (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Ayers, 2001). For example, the pathway prospective teachers must follow to enter the profession includes multiple assessments that measure their basic skills and subject area knowledge. Further, current law in many states evaluates teachers' efficacy based on student test scores, with up to 50% of the teacher's overall effectiveness based on standardized test scores.

These cognitive emphases are problematic, as they represent only one dimension of the understanding of the process of teaching (Hargreaves, 1998). Extensive research in the field has defined teaching as an emotional practice (Case et al, 2000; Hargreaves, 1994 & 1998; Malm, 2009; Nias, 1996; and Zembylas, 2003). Moreover, research has explicitly linked teacher quality to teachers' emotional understanding of their work, with the understanding that effective teachers engage in relationship building both in the

classroom with students, as well as with constituencies tangential to the classroom teacher's experience, such as with parents, colleagues, and administrators (Denzin, 1984; Hargreaves, 2001). As such, this study sought to explore how these areas of interaction are perceived by teachers in an attempt to understand how teachers' emotionality informs not only how they perceive the work of teaching, but how their perceptions and understandings of their work shape their identities as teachers. The analysis of these addressed the following research questions:

1. In what ways does the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching?
2. How do the interrelated discourses of gender and class inform emotional geographies and shape female high school English teachers' understanding of their professional identities?

Guided by these research questions, the analysis in this chapter consists of two distinct areas: a broad description of the research participants, followed by teacher perception data that emerged from focus group interviews. Chapter five will conclude the findings of the study, ending with three specific case studies with teachers representing each of the three (working class, middle class, and affluent class) schools.

Holistic description of research participants

As described in Chapter 3, due to circumstances I had not anticipated, all English teachers, both male and female, at the three high schools were invited to participate in the initial survey, the first phase of the study. However, a pleasant surprise came when this data supported previous research regarding both gender composition and perceived

socioeconomic class. All of the data presented beginning with the subheading *Gender* and through the subheading *Relationships with administrators* is drawn from the initial survey and represents both male and female responses (n=37). Where appropriate in my discussion, I disaggregated the data into male and female percentages. In total, there were 8 males and 29 females who participated in the survey.

Gender.

As represented on the comparative charts below (Figure 1 and Figure 2), the gender composition of participants in the study nearly mirrored the findings of Aud et al. (2012).

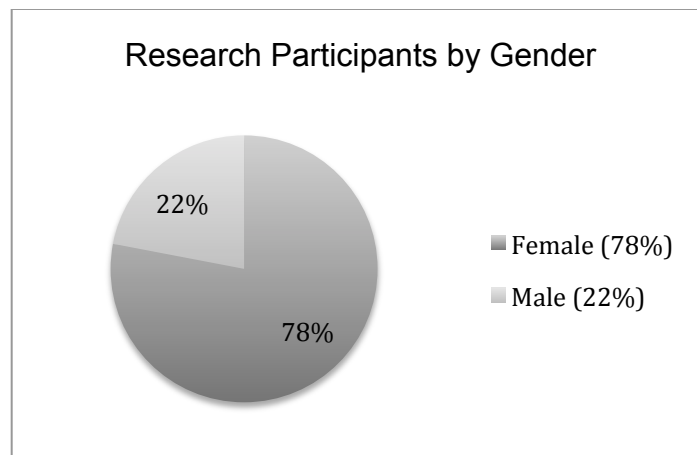


Figure 1. The figure above shows the gender representation in the initial phase of the research study, where approximately 78 % (n=29) of participants identified as female and 22% (n=8) identified as male.

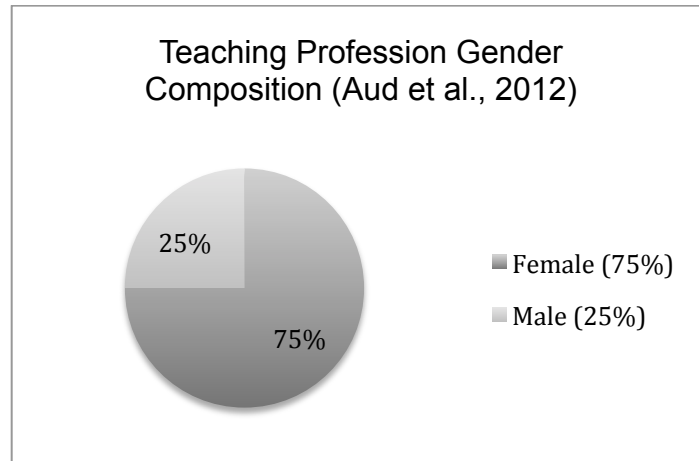


Figure 2. The figure above shows the overall gender representation in the teaching profession, where approximately 75% of teachers are female and 25% are male (Aud et al., 2012).

Socioeconomic class.

Similarly, research has identified teaching as a predominantly middle class profession (Snyder, 2014), which was also seen in how research participants self-identified their socioeconomic class. Categories for socioeconomic class emerged from United States Census (2010) data (see p. 72 for specifics). Without given prompts or definitions, all research participants placed themselves in the middle 3/5 of suggested socioeconomic status categories for both their perceived family socioeconomic status in their formative years as well as their perceived socioeconomic status currently, with slight differences in the responses by gender. Figure 3 and Figure 4 below illustrate how both female and male teachers self-selected their socioeconomic status, with the description for each figure also identifying choices according to gender. What was interesting here was the similarity in socioeconomic status self-identification in the middle classes both by female and male teachers in both formative and current years. The descriptions for Figure 3 and Figure 4 also present gender specific socioeconomic status identification.

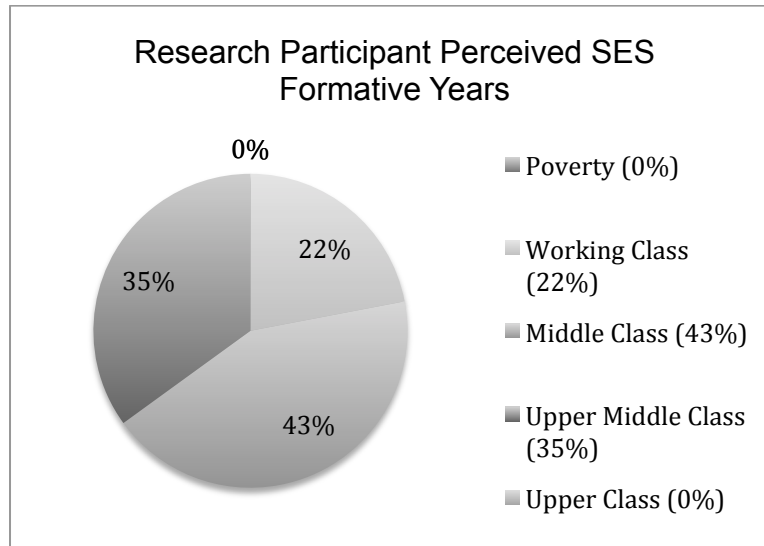


Figure 3. All teachers (female and male) perceived their socioeconomic status in their formative years to be within a broad range of middle class, with a slight variation between female and male responses. Female teachers identified as 21% (n=6) Working Class, 42% (n=12) Middle Class, and 38% (n=11) Upper Middle Class. Male teachers identified as 25% (n=2) Working Class, 50% (n=4) Middle Class, and 25% (n=2) Upper Middle Class. Figure 3 represents a division of the middle class into thirds, where working class is considered lower middle class.

Teacher perception data concerning their socioeconomic status of origin was also confirmed by a textual analysis of responses regarding the professions of both parents. In order of frequency, the five most common professions of respondents' mothers were: *teacher, nurse, homemaker, small business owner, and secretary*, occupations situated in the middle classes. Similarly, the five most common professions of respondents' fathers were: *teacher, police officer, truck driver, small business owner, and skilled tradesman*, also occupations situated in the middle classes.

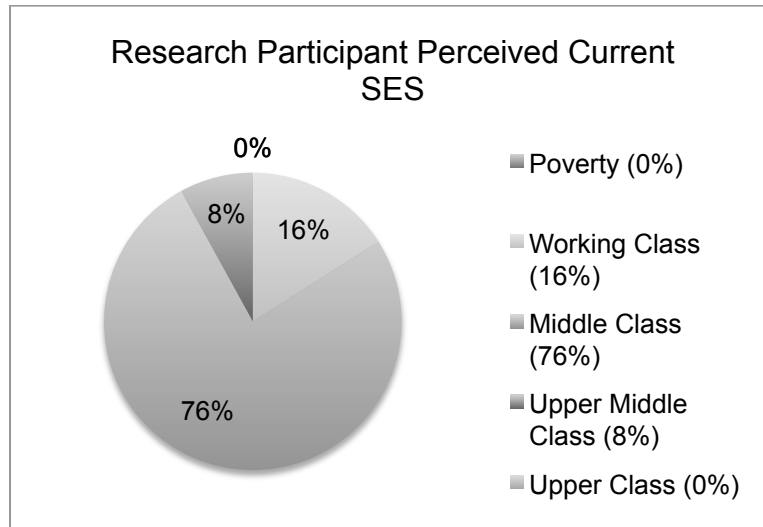


Figure 4. Additionally, all teachers perceived their current socioeconomic status within the broad range of middle class, with working class is considered lower middle class. Female teachers identified as 14% (n=4) Working Class, 79% (n=23) Middle Class, and 7% (n=2) Upper Middle Class. Male teachers identified as 25% (n=2) Working Class, 63% (n=5) Middle Class, and 12% (n=1) Upper Middle Class.

When comparing the above (Figure 4) self-identified socioeconomic class with all teachers' self-reported annual household income (both genders), the results were slightly different. Here, the majority of teachers still identified solidly with membership in one of the three middle classes, however approximately 1/5 of these teachers identified their annual household income above \$108,000 per year, an amount that designates household membership in the upper class. There were some differences when this data was analyzed according to gender. While neither gender identified as having an annual household income below \$36,000, female and male indications regarding the other four levels differed, with 15% (n=4) of female and 25% (n=2) of male households earning between \$36,001-\$60,000 per year, 33% (n=9) of female and 50% (n=4) of male households earning between \$60,001-\$84,000 per year, 22% (n=6) of female and 12% (n=1) of male households earning between \$84,001-\$108,000 per year, and 26% (n=7) of female and 12% (n=1) of male households earning above

\$108,000 per year. It is important to note that these numbers represent one abstention, a respondent who chose not to provide information for this prompt. Furthermore, there are several possible explanations for these gender discrepancies, the first being the differences in number of female (n=29) versus male (n=8) survey participants. Another consideration is the marital status of the participant. In the survey, 76% (n=22) of female respondents said they were married, compared with only 63% (n=5) of male respondents. While both represent a majority of respondents by gender, when combined with a spouse's income, as this question asked participants to indicate total household income, it is reasonable to assume that 13% -- the difference between female and male married respondents -- would appear in the upper categories of total household income, which is what the data indicated. Figure 5 below illustrates the range of household income indicated by research participants of both genders.

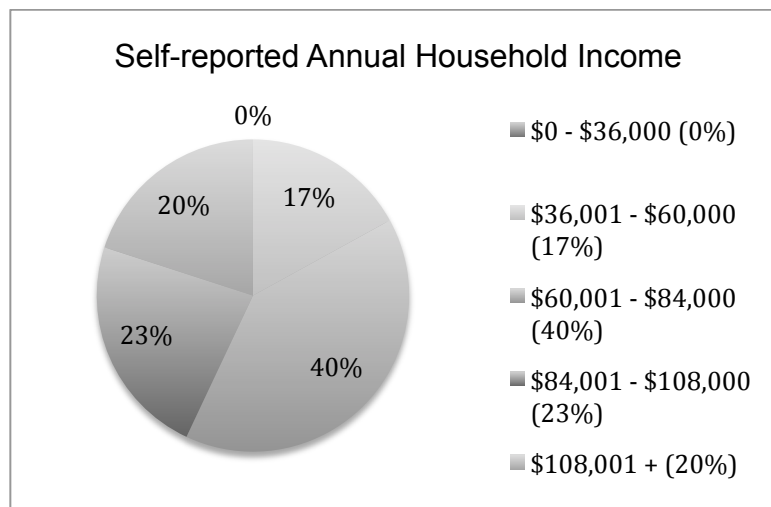


Figure 5. While reflecting the same socioeconomic class categories as represented in the item asking teachers to self-identify their social class, the teacher-reported annual household income responses indicated a discrepancy in that perception, with 20% of all teachers placing themselves in the upper class.

Age and experience.

Overall, participants represented a broad range of ages and experience. Including both genders, 68% of research participants were between the ages of 26 – 40, while 32% were age 41 or older. Similar numbers appeared when broken down by gender, with 69% (n=20) of female participants and 63% (n=5) of male participants between the ages of 26 – 40, and 31% (n=9) of female participants and 38% (n=3) of male participants age 41 or older. Between both genders, 46% had been teaching for 1-10 years, 38% for 11-20 years, and 16% for 21 or more years. This data correlates with NCES data for public school teachers fairly closely, as the most recent information identifies these percentages as 42%, 36%, and 21% respectively (Snyder, 2014). When broken down by gender, female percentages more closely represented NCES data, with 48% (n=14) teaching 1-10 years, 35% (n=10) for 11-20 years, and 17% (n=5) for 21 or more years. Male percentages were 38% (n=3) for 1-10 years, 50% (n=4) for 11-20 years, and 12% (n=1) for 21 or more years.

Of the 37 teachers who participated in the first phase of the study, 84% of respondents indicated that teaching was their first choice as a career, with the remaining 16% coming to teaching as a second career after participating in the related professions of writing and journalism (10.7%) or from business (5.3%). While this response significantly varied from research that indicates as many as 35% of teachers come to teaching as a second or third career (Markow & Pieters, 2010), the lower number of respondents, 37 compared to over 1000 surveyed by Markow & Pieters, may explain this disparity. When responses were viewed according to gender, the percentages, while different, were not markedly different. Here, 86.21% (n=25) of female teachers indicated teaching was their first career choice, with 14% (n=4) designating it as a

second career choice. The female teachers for whom teaching was not a first choice said that their first career choices were in business (n=2) or writing (n=2). Similarly, 75% (n=6) of male teachers said teaching was their first career choice, with 25% (n=2) indicating teaching as a second career choice, with business (n=1) and writing (n=1) as their first career choices. Nevertheless, while the age and experience provides a beginning point for understanding the teachers who participated in the study, the next section will describe the daily work of these high school English teachers.

Describing the work of high school teaching.

The data participants provided regarding the daily work of teaching is, on some levels, what one might expect in terms of the grade levels and types of classes taught. On the other hand, telling information emerged regarding teacher workload, teaching methods, and curriculum. These will be detailed below.

Grade levels represented. When asked to identify the grade levels they regularly teach (as of the time of the survey), the 37 respondents provided 97 unique responses covering the four traditional grades in the American high school: 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th. Within these responses, the distribution varied somewhat by gender. In total, including both female and male teachers, 65% (n=24) of teachers taught 9th grade, 70% (n=26) of teachers taught 10th grade, 60% (n=22) of teachers taught 11th grade, and 68% (n=25) teachers taught 12th grade. When the data was analyzed according to the gender of the respondent, there were some similarities and differences that emerged, as seen in Figure 6 (below). Interestingly, the grade level the fewest teachers identified, 11th grade, is the grade level in which the majority of mandated student testing occurs.

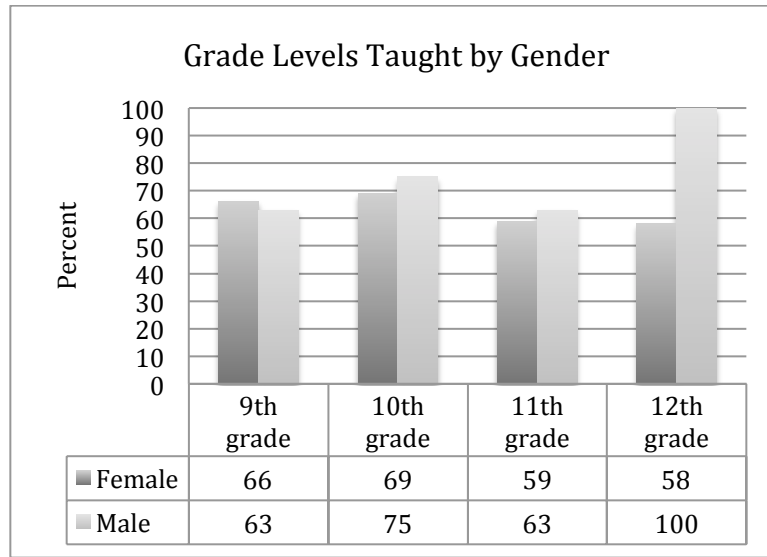


Figure 6. When analyzed according to gender, the grade levels taught by female and male teachers were relatively similar for grades 9, 10, and 11. A large difference emerged in the 12th grade, where only 59% (n=17) of female teachers taught versus 100% (n=8) of male teachers. This disparity may be a reflection of the power of the patriarchal society (Grumet, 1988), where men's ways of knowing – in this case, knowledge about upper level coursework – are valued more than women's ways of knowing. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the limitations afforded by the relatively low number of total respondents (n=37).

Classes taught. Public high schools provide a wide range of courses to accommodate its diverse group of learners. Teachers were asked to identify the types of classes they were currently teaching by choosing them from a list. A combined analysis of all teachers who took the survey (n=37) revealed 81% taught classes required by their schools for graduation (core classes), while only 19% taught elective courses in their English departments. Subdividing these courses, 52% of all teachers taught *general education* courses; 32% taught *accelerated, advanced, or Advanced Placement* courses; and 16% taught *special education* courses (which represent a combination of *resource room classes, co-taught classes, and special education classes*).

Further analysis according to teacher gender revealed similar results according to the types (core vs. elective) of classes taught, where 83% (n=24) of female teachers

taught at least one core class and 31% (n=9) taught at least one elective class. Similarly, 75% (n=6) of male teachers taught at least one core class, while 25% (n=2) taught at least one elective class. While teachers were given five distinct categories from which to choose (they could choose all that applied) – *general education*, *accelerated/advanced/AP*, *co-taught*, *resource room*, and *special education* – I combined these into three categories by combining the three types of special education designations (*co-taught*, *resource room*, and *special education*) into one category. Stark differences emerged, however, when teachers identified the types of classes they teach by academic level. The results are represented in Figure 7 (below).

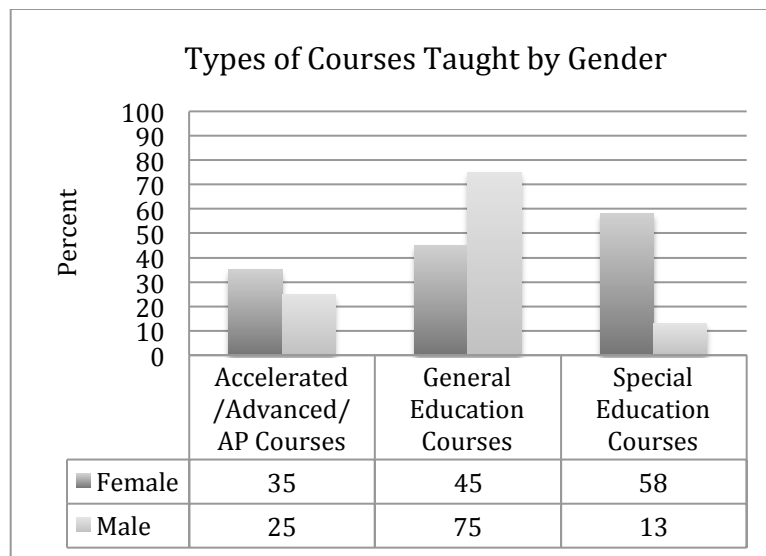


Figure 7. When analyzed according to gender, the types of courses taught by female and male teachers varied. Here, 75% of male teachers (n=6) versus 45% (n=13) of female teachers said they taught at least one general education course; 25% of male teachers (n=2) and 35% of female teachers said they taught at least one accelerated, advanced, or AP course; and 58% (n=8) of female teachers versus 13% (n=1) of male teachers said they taught at least one special education course. This chart shows that while the numbers of female and male teachers of *accelerated/advanced/AP* courses are more similar, many more male teachers than female teachers said they taught *general education* courses whereas many more female teachers said they taught *special education* courses than their male counterparts. Again, the sample size (n=37) may be a limitation, but the findings are intriguing.

Teacher obligations at school beyond the teaching day. While all teachers taught a full course load of high school English classes, over 78% (n=29) had school-related obligations beyond the actual teaching day in the form of school club sponsorships or school athletic coaching. Of these, 69% (n=20) were involved in clubs or activities that did not relate to the teaching of English, while 31% (n=9) sponsored activities related to the teaching of English, such as *Writing Club* and *Book Club*. Separating the responses by gender, 80% (n=23) of female teachers versus 86% (n=6, due to one male who skipped this question) of male teachers indicated obligations at school beyond the school day. Of these, 28% (n=8) of female teachers and 14% (n=1) of male teachers sponsored clubs or activities related to the teaching of English, while 52% (n=15) of female teachers and 71% (n=5) of male teachers said they were involved in school activities or coaching not related to the teaching of English. While there was some variance in responses by gender regarding English vs. non-English based after school activity sponsorship or coaching, the overall numbers for both female (80%) and male (86%) teachers was quite high.

One question that still remains regarding this information is what percentage of these activities provides teachers additional compensation? While this varies from school to school, Martin & Loomis (2014) indicated that club sponsorships and coaching are compensated activities in many schools. Regardless, the fact remains that 4 of 5 teachers are involved in additional obligations related to their schools beyond the school day and before they are able to attend to the grading and planning obligations that fall outside of the parameters of the work day at school, which will be addressed in the next section.

Teacher obligations at home beyond the teaching day. When asked to indicate how many hours per week teachers conducted the work of teaching (lesson planning, grading, etc.) at home in a fill-in-the-blank style response that provided no specific guidelines, the results were not surprising, yet offered some remarkable insight. Overall, teachers said they worked an average of 13.8 hours per week at home conducting the work of teaching, which represents about 2.5 hours of work at home for each day of school taught. If one considers the hours high school English teachers are required to be on the job each day, typically 7.5, this translates into an average week of about 50 hours, 10 hours above the 40-hour week that is considered full time in the United States.

Teachers' responses were placed into three categories, representing those spending 0-9 hours, 10-19 hours, and 20+ hours on the work of teaching high school English each week at home. Including teachers of both genders, 32% (n=12) said they spend 0-9 hours working at home per week, with an average of 4.75 hours; 41% (n=15) said they spend 10-19 hours working at home per week, with an average of 12.75 hours; and 27% (n=10) said they spend 20 or more hours working at home per week, with an average of 21.5 hours. What was interesting, however, was how the numbers representing hours per week teachers spend on the work of teaching at home varied according to the teacher's gender. When these comparisons are offered, a distinct disparity emerged in the upper category, with 20% more female teachers than male teachers indicating they spend 20 or more hours working at home per week (see Figure 8 below).

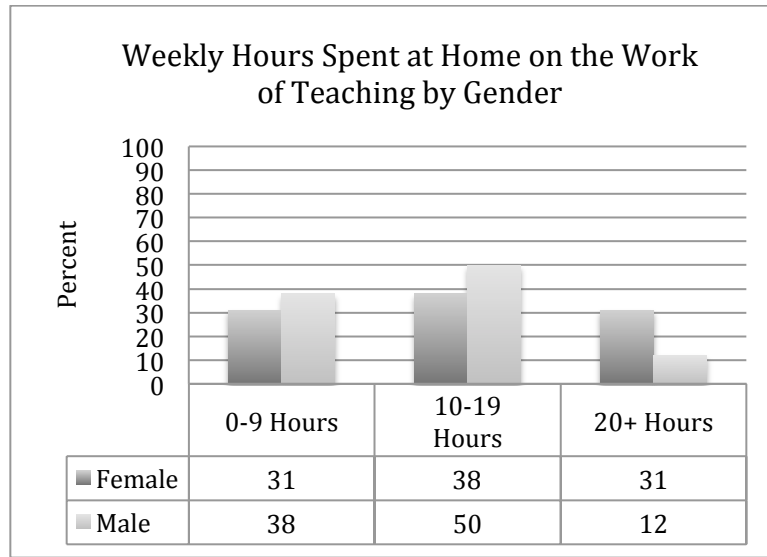


Figure 8. When analyzed according to gender, the hours female and male teachers spent at home on the work of teaching each week varied. Here, 31% (n=9) of female teachers versus 38% (n=3) of male teachers said they worked between 0-9 hours at home each week. The disparity widened slightly at the 10-19 hour range, with 38% (n=11) of female teachers and 50% (n=4) of male teachers placing themselves in this category. The greatest disparity occurred in the category representing 20+ hours of work at home each week, with 31% (n=9) of female teachers versus 12% (n=1) of male teachers indicating this amount of work at home beyond the school day.

While the overall numbers here do not seem surprising given the content preparation and grading responsibilities of high school English teachers, whose total student numbers for the semester in which the study occurred ranged from 118 to 152, it does beg the question: What motivates individuals to pursue the teaching of high school English as a profession? The next section will discuss reasons teachers gave for entering the profession in order to provide insight and possible answers to this question.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for teaching.

One item on the survey asked teachers to list the reasons they decided to enter the profession. Teachers were not given a list of terms from which to choose, nor were they limited in their responses. As was the case with all of the data that emerged in this manner from the survey, focus groups, and individual interviews, I analyzed the data in

response to this question by grouping them into sematic domains to organize for patterns of sameness, using a memo writing process to categorize the data as a means of identifying larger relationships or themes (Maxwell, 2005; Charmaz, 2006). In looking for relationships of meaning (see pp. 86-88), I engaged in analysis that was ongoing and recursive (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999), allowing for the discovery of taxonomic structure (McCurdy et al., 2005), as well as the examination and further categorization of data and the naming of the relationships that emerged (Titscher et al., 2005).

Based on teachers' responses regarding their reasons for entering the teaching profession, I was able to categorize my analysis of their responses into two distinct areas: *intrinsic motivations* and *extrinsic motivations*, based in part on the research by Pop & Turner (2009), who identified teachers' motives for becoming educators. For the purpose of clarity, this study defines these motivations according to self-determination theory, in which intrinsic motivation is classified as actions that propel individual engagement because they are interesting and enjoyable to the individual, while extrinsic motivation is classified as a motivation that propels individual engagement because there is an inherent and external reward associated with the behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Exploring teachers' reasons for doing the work of teaching provided an initial entry point for understanding how they feel about their work – their emotional transactions surrounding teaching.

Emotion, defined as an experience of involvement and social interaction (Barbalet, 2002; Vygotsky, 1987), provides the means for a comprehensive understanding of emotionality. An individual's social interaction not only serves to make sense of emotion, but also functions as a guiding principle in the ongoing

management of one's place in the world where emotion serves as a link to agency (Barbalet, 2002). In essence, "emotion lies in the social relationship" (Barbalet, 2002, p. 4). As such, research participants indicated a variety of interactions that were ascertained using textual analysis to identify frequency of occurrence. Using this information, I was able to categorize this research data supporting teachers' reasons for becoming teachers as being connected to either internal or external motivations. These two areas are discussed in further detail below.

Intrinsic motivation. Using Deci & Ryan's (2008) definition of intrinsic motivation as an engagement that propels individual interest due to enjoyment or pleasure, I categorized teachers' responses into two broad types of engagement in this area: a *personal sense of interest* and a *personal sense of agency*. Respondents were asked to list the reasons supporting their decision to enter the teaching profession, with no limit on the length of their responses. In about half of the 32 unique responses (five participants skipped this question), individual respondents listed several reasons, resulting in 15 of the 32 respondents' information being placed into two or three categories, for a total of 46 comments. In the 32 unique responses that represented both female (n=26) and male (n=6) teachers, 76% were related to one of these two types of intrinsic motivation, with *personal sense of agency* identifications comprising 30% and *personal sense of interest* identifications comprising 46% (see Figure 9 below). What is most interesting here is the complete flip in how female and male teachers responded. Whereas 50% (n=19) of female teachers said they became English teachers due to their love of the subject matter, compared with 25% (n=2) of male teachers, 50% (n=4) of male teachers said they became English teachers in order to instill a sense of love for the

subject matter in others, compared with 26% (n=10) of female teachers who responded this way. In the following paragraphs, I will provide the specific composition of the responses that represent these categories.

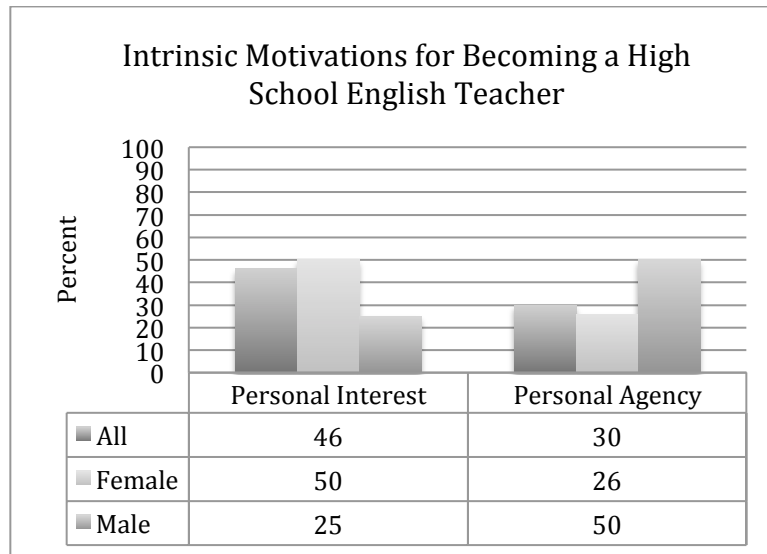


Figure 9. This chart provides a side-by-side comparison of teachers' comments that represented their intrinsic motivations for becoming high school English teachers. While all responses, regardless of gender, could be placed into these two categories, when analyzed according to gender, the Figure 9 shows a greater percentage of female teachers (50% versus 25%) said they became teachers because of a personal interest or love of the subject matter (English), while a greater percentage of male teachers (50% versus 26%) said they became teachers because they had an interest in helping others understand the subject matter.

Personal Sense of Interest. Almost one-half, a total of 46% (n=21) of respondents, demonstrated a *personal sense of interest* for the subject matter as a major consideration in the decision to become an English teacher. The most frequent words that emerged in this category were: *love*, *passion*, and *enjoyment*. Teachers who responded in this category specified they were drawn to the profession of teaching English because they had a *love* of the subject matter (68%), a *passion* for the subject matter (16%), or an *enjoyment* of the subject matter (11%). In all of these instances, the teachers' own sense of personal interest in and appreciation of the English language arts,

including the specific areas of language, literature, reading, and writing, commanded their motivations. These identifications illustrate the intangibility of intrinsic reward, where teachers' *love, passion, or enjoyment*, represent an unbridled self-expression that ultimately results in self-satisfaction (Spuck, 1974).

Personal Sense of Agency. About 30% (n=14) of the responses revealed some type of *personal sense of agency* as the driving force behind choosing to become an English teacher. Within this category, four distinct sub-categories emerged based on word frequency that indicates teaching is an altruistic engagement: *helping others, positively contributing to society, valuing knowledge, and effecting change*. For these teachers, the act of teaching was to serve others for reasons of personal fulfillment. Within the category of *personal sense of agency*, the most frequent response was that teachers entered the profession *to help others* (57%), illustrating Noddings' (1984) ethic of care, which focuses on the relationship between teachers and their students, and the idea that teachers have their students' best interests at heart. The other aspects of personal agency that emerged from the study were not as student-related or as common as the *helping others* sub-category, but nevertheless represented a moral sense of agency to use their role as teacher in order to *contribute positively to society* (24%), to *affect larger social change* (9.5%), and to *demonstrate a value for the power of knowledge* (9.5%). These responses resonate with the scholarship of Freire (2007), Giroux (1988b), and others who have argued that teachers are – and need to act as -- change agents who are entrusted with the task of advocating for those who are not in traditional positions to do so. Again, as is the case with those who exhibited a *personal sense of interest*, teachers who saw themselves as having a *personal sense of agency* regarding the work

of teaching demonstrated a core sense of self-determination that their roles as teachers impacted not only their students, but the larger world around them.

Extrinsic motivation. Using Deci & Ryan's (2008) definition of extrinsic motivation as a motivation that propels individual engagement because there is an inherent and external reward associated with the behavior, the data presented two distinct types of engagement: *professional encouragement* and *professional interest*. Again, these emerged when respondents were asked to list the reasons supporting their decision to enter the teaching profession. There were no limits on the length of the responses teachers provided, and, similar to the data that emerged regarding teachers' intrinsic motivations for becoming high school English teachers, 15 of the 32 respondents' information was placed into two or three categories, for a total of 46 comments. In the 32 unique responses that represented both female (n=26) and male (n=6) teachers, 24% were related to one of these two types of extrinsic motivation, with *professional encouragement* identifications comprising 91% of the responses (n=10) and *professional interest* identifications comprising the remaining 9% (n=1). In total, almost one-fourth of all responses in the survey linked the desire for entering the profession to extrinsic motivations. Unlike the gender disparity that emerged regarding teachers' intrinsic motivations for teaching, data demonstrating teachers' extrinsic motivations for teaching showed very little difference by gender (see Figure 10 below). While the number of responses was limited, the data overwhelmingly show the power that suggestion and encouragement by others has on individual action, which will be discussed further in this section. In the following two paragraphs, I will discuss the specific findings in this category.

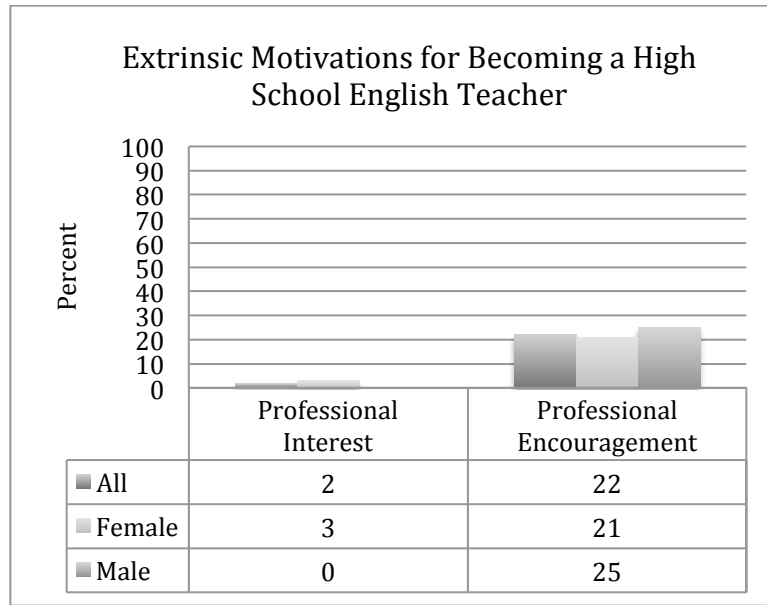


Figure 10. This chart provides a side-by-side comparison of teachers' comments that represented their extrinsic motivations for becoming high school English teachers. While all responses, regardless of gender, could be placed into these two categories, when analyzed according to gender, Figure 10 shows that responses by gender were very similar by both category and total response percentage. In total, only 24% (n=11) of all responses indicated extrinsic motivations for teaching. Within this category, professional encouragement responses far outweighed professional interest responses.

Professional Encouragement. While the category of extrinsic motivation was the least cited reason that determined teachers' entrance into the profession, within this category, *professional encouragement* emerged as the greatest extrinsic motivator for the decision to become a teacher. Here, *professional encouragement* is defined as sources external to the teachers (family, friends, teachers, etc.) who directly impacted, via either direct suggestion or personal example, the teachers' desire to teach high school English. Responses in this sub-category could be divided into two distinct areas: *professional encouragement from family or friends* (75%) or *professional encouragement from teachers or professors* (25%). These identifications not only show the power of external influences on individual decision-making, but also illustrate the

power of the language of “waking” suggestion to effect an individual’s perception, thinking, and action (James, 1907).

Professional Interest. Of the four categories that represent teachers’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, *professional interest* extrinsic motivations saw the fewest responses of any of these (2%). Further, responses whose membership can be situated in this category represented only 9% (n=1) of extrinsic motivations. For the purpose of this research, *professional interest* is defined as a type of extrinsic motivation for teaching that lies in the tangibility of external reward (Spuck, 1974). It is important to note, however, that the concept of external reward, though commonly identified as monetary in nature (salary and benefits), may also consist of other external tangibles related to the work of teaching. Given this definition, the sub-categories that emerged to represent professional interest were *job security*, *teaching schedule*, and *vacation schedule*. In all, only one teacher, a female, who responded to this survey question identified extrinsic professional interests as reasons for becoming an English teacher, supporting Smylie’s (1994) assertion that the meaningfulness of work is affected more strongly by intrinsic motivations than extrinsic ones.

Teachers’ perceptions about autonomy in the workplace.

While this research found that intrinsic motivations guide the majority of high school English teachers into the work of teaching, Smylie (1994) also argued that autonomy is a factor in determining motivation, as it allows individuals to attribute success to their own efforts. When teachers identify that *helping others* is the major factor informing their intrinsic motivation to teach English, as is the case in this study, then it is reasonable to assume that being afforded the autonomy to perform their jobs is

also a factor in creating meaningfulness and supporting motivation. To that effect, teachers were given a five-point Likert Scale (with values ranging from 1= none to 5= complete) asking them to indicate their perceptions regarding the autonomy they feel they have in their work both in terms of *curriculum (what they teach)* and *methods (how they teach)*. The next two paragraphs will discuss each of these more specifically. Figure 11 (below) shows response comparisons for the first question surrounding teachers' autonomy regarding what they teach for the entire group followed by responses according to gender. Prior to the paragraph about teacher autonomy regarding how teachers teach, Figure 12 shows response comparisons for the second question, comparing the all responses to those according to gender. In sum, both Figure 11 and Figure 12 show little to no variance in teachers' responses by gender.

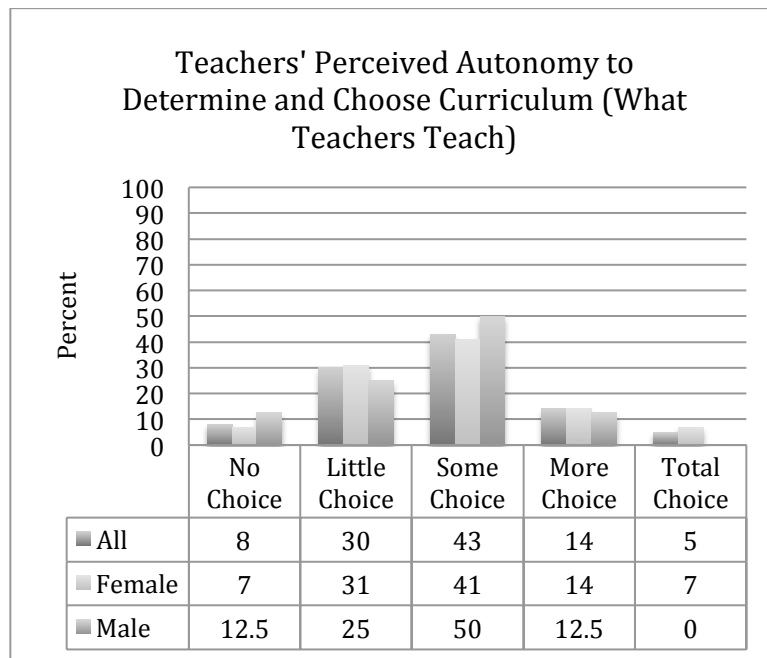


Figure 11. In total, all teachers (n=37; f=29; m=8) completed this survey item that asked them to rate the extent to which they felt they had choice regarding what they teach (curriculum). As Figure 11 indicates, responses were similar among the three groups with some slight difference. For example, by percentage, fewer female (n=2) than male (n=1) teachers perceived they had *no choice* in determining their curriculum,

fewer female (n=12) than male (n=4) teachers perceived they has *some choice* in determining their curriculum, while more female (n=2) than male teachers (n=0) perceived they had total choice in determining their curriculum. Overall, the results reflect a standard distribution of responses, with the majority of responses falling in the middle, or *some choice*, category.

Autonomy and what teachers teach. Teachers' perceived sense of autonomy regarding their curriculum, or what they teach, varied, with 81% of respondents (n=30) indicating they had some to no autonomy in determining what they were able to teach in their classrooms. In contrast, 19% of respondents (n=7) indicated they had near or complete autonomy in choosing what they could teach in their classrooms. It is important to note here that more specifics about this were revealed during the focus groups and individual interviews, where teachers spoke at length about how they saw that the implementation of the Common Core Standards in many of their schools had resulted in teacher choice being eliminated in favor of common courses of study required of all teachers and students. While it is important to note here that the Common Core Standards are just that – standards for student learning – the responses of teachers indicated that the CCS's suggestions for literature study, for example, were construed as being more than suggestions by school or district personnel. This local misrepresentation, then, provides more specific context for understanding the perceptions of the majority of teachers who feel that the implementation of the Common Core Standards at their schools has resulted in decreasing the autonomy teachers once had to choose what they teach.

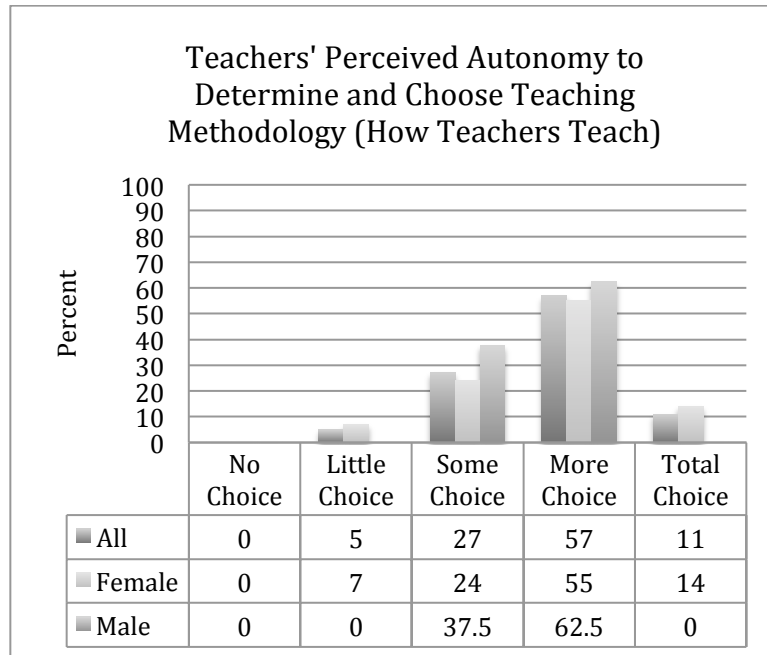


Figure 12. In total, all teachers (n=37; f=29; m=8) completed this survey item that asked them to rate the extent to which they felt they had choice regarding how they teach (methodology). As Figure 12 indicates, no respondents perceived to have *no choice* in how they taught, with the majority of respondents (n=31) indicating they had *some* (f=7, m=3) to *more* (f=16, m=5) choice. Interestingly, no male respondents perceived themselves to have either *no choice* or *total choice*, placing their responses in the middle three categories. Other than these differences, responses by category were relatively similar.

Autonomy and how teachers teach. In contrast, teachers' perceptions regarding their autonomy in deciding which methods they can use to teach the curriculum presented differently, with a majority of teachers (68%) indicating they had near or complete autonomy in determining how they teach their students, while a sizeable minority (32%) said they had some to no autonomy. This was verified in the focus groups, as those who indicated they had some to no autonomy in how they taught material to students particularly mentioned they had to follow pacing guides that included specific scripts that all teachers were required to read to the students. One teacher representing the working class school sighed at the ridiculousness of having to

read a script to students, but noted that she felt her evaluation would be negatively affected if an administrator walked in to her room and she was not on script. Nevertheless, while this is concerning, it should also be noted that the tensions identified by this teacher between following the script and following what she knew to be good teaching resulted in feelings of conflict and stress, negative classroom indicators that detract from the meaningful work of teaching (Smylie, 1994, pp. 152-153).

Teachers' perceptions as informed by their relationships.

According to Hargreaves' (2001) research, the many relationships in which teachers engage – including those with students, colleagues, parents, and administrators – continuously shape their emotional experiences, thus informing their identities in unique and complex ways (p. 1057). It is these recurrent patterns of “human interactions and relationships that help create, configure, and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1061). Based on the significance of the relational interactions Hargreaves identified, research participants were asked to identify both their perceptions of the quality of their relationships with these various constituencies (students, parents, colleagues, and administrators) using a five-point Likert Scale (ranging from 1= very poor to 5= very good), as well as to identify a single word they thought best represented how each of these constituencies would describe the teacher. The single words teachers provided were then sorted according to how frequently they appeared. These survey indicators served as an initial point from which to understand teachers' perceptions about these relationships as well as to inform the questions and conversations in the focus groups

and individual interviews. The next four paragraphs will discuss teachers' perceptions about their relationships with *students*, *parents*, *colleagues*, and *administrators*.

Relationships with students. As demonstrated earlier in the section addressing their motivations for teaching, particularly teachers' identified need *to help others* through their work, the relationships that teachers have with their students provide some of the most meaningful rewards of teaching (Smylie, 1994, p. 152). The perception data that emerged in this area supports this. All teachers surveyed (n=37) rated their relationships with students as average or above, with a resounding 95% rating their relationships as either good or very good, reflecting a weighted average of 4.57 on a scale of 1-5. Further, nearly 2/3 of teachers identified their relationships with students as *very good*, the top designation.

In addition to indicating their perceptions about relationships with students on the Likert Scale, teachers were also asked to provide one word to describe how their students would describe them. All of the individual words teachers provided were words that described teachers' personal qualities – none of the responses reflected teachers' cognitive discourses focusing on their expertise or subject area knowledge, which supports Hargreaves' (2001) assertion that teachers' emotionality constitutes a type of counter-discourse to these traditional cognitive discourses that have always defined the work of teaching. The terms teachers most frequently identified as how they perceived their students would describe them include *caring* (16%), *kind* (8%), *fun* (8%), *passionate* (5%), and *understanding* (5%). The percentages following each of these words was ascertained by computing the number of times each word appeared as a response divided by the total number of responses, which is also how percentages of

word use were determined throughout this chapter. Likewise, these traits were also confirmed through member checks across the three focus group interviews when teachers were asked to produce words that reflected how they thought their students might describe them, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Relationships with parents. Although relationships with students achieved the most significant weighted average among respondents, teachers' relationship with parents still saw a high confidence rating, with a 4.14 weighted average. What differentiated this relationship dynamic from the two previous categories is the decrease in respondents who indicated they perceived their relationships with parents to be *very good*. So, while 83% of respondents still rated their relationships with parents as *good* or *very good*, with nearly one-third of those choosing *very good*, a greater percentage identified their relationships as *good* more frequently, at nearly 53%. This change shows that while teachers see their relationships with parents in overall positive terms – none indicated *very poor* or *poor* – they nevertheless seem to perceive their relationships with parents more distantly than they do with the entities they see most, specifically their students and their colleagues. This interpretation aligns what Hargreaves (2001) identified as patterns of closeness and distance in human interactions.

When analyzing the individual word responses that teachers provided to describe their perception of how parents would describe them, the most frequently identified words reflect a combination of personal and professional qualities. In order of frequency, teachers said parents would describe them as *caring* (11%), *fair* (11%), *dedicated* (11%), *challenging* (5%), *compassionate* (5%), and *supportive* (5%). While these terms are all positive, personal qualities like being *caring* and *compassionate* are

distinguished from professional qualities like being *dedicated* and *challenging*. As was the case with the Likert Scale identification, this dichotomy also appears to reflect a pattern of closeness and distance (Hargreaves, 2001), with teachers understanding themselves to occupy a relationship that reflects complexity in its view of agency, spanning the spectrum from the personal to the professional.

Relationships with colleagues. Similar to the perception data teachers revealed about their relationships with students, teachers also rated their relationships with colleagues positively, with all teachers surveyed placing this value at either average or above. While 14% indicated an average relationship with colleagues, 87% said their relationships with their fellow teachers was *good* (38%) or *very good* (49%). While the weighted average for this category was not as strong as the indicator for relationships with students, at 4.35, it nevertheless provides insight into how teachers view collegial interactions, particularly considering that research has identified these interactions can be a source of tension and stress on the job, negatively affecting classroom performance (Smylie, 1994, pp. 152-153).

Teachers were also asked to provide one word that described how they think their colleagues would describe them as teachers. In contrast to their responses regarding how teachers thought their students would describe them, the most frequent words they provided were distributed more equally and tended to describe the teachers in terms of how they take up their work. These words included: *dedicated* (5%), *efficient* (5%), *energetic* (5%), *hard working* (5%), and *understanding* (5%). All other responses were unique, but nevertheless related to the nature of work, such as *team player*, *organized*, and *driven*.

Relationships with administrators. In terms of patterns of closeness and distance, teachers' relationships with administrators occupy the middle area between the closeness of their relationships with students and colleagues and the distance of their relationships with parents. The weighted average here mirrored the one representing teachers' perceptions of their relationships with parents, 4.14. While no teachers identified their relationship with administrators as *very poor*, the lowest category, one respondent did indicate a *poor* relationship with administrators. At the other extreme, over 40% indicated a *very good* relationship with administrators, 10% more than they rated this category with parents. In total, 76% of respondents rated their relationship with administrators as *good* or *very good*, with 22% rating the relationship *average*.

Similar to the responses teachers provided regarding identifying one word they would choose to describe how colleagues viewed them as teachers, respondents overwhelmingly used language that can be categorized as *professional*. An analysis of the most frequently appearing words teachers provided for this question revealed descriptors that relate to the work of teaching, such as *effective* (17%), *professional* (5%), *reliable* (5%), and *willing* (5%). Perhaps the emotional distance of *professional discourse* as seen in the perception of the relationship with administrators versus that of the closeness of *personal discourse* seen in relationships with students and colleagues is connected to the role of the administrator as occupying a position of power and control. Regardless, this cursory glance provided insight into the composition and balance of relationships that shape the emotions teachers experience in the course of doing the work of teaching. The next section, drawing from the three focus groups, will delve more specifically into teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching.

Description of the emergence of focus group data

As discussed in Chapter 3 (pp. 82-84), I conducted a total of three focus group interviews consisting of a total of 12 female teachers. Due to scheduling issues, my original plan to have each focus group consist of teachers from the same school was not possible, though each focus group did contain teacher representatives from each of the three targeted school types (working, middle, and affluent class). Because focus groups tend to produce researcher-generated data (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010), I was very mindful about letting the focus group participants speak freely with very minimal prompting or engagement from me, instead allowing their conversations to go in whatever direction participants chose. Although the focus groups consisted of mixed groups of teachers from the three school types, this approach resulted in each group moving in unique conversational directions under the larger topic umbrella presented to them with the original questions (Appendix F). Further, I noticed that the teachers' conversations tended to follow the previous teacher's response, eliciting what Edwards & Potter (1992) described as naturally occurring data. So, even though the initial prompts for discussion were researcher-generated, analysis of the teacher conversations represents naturally occurring data. The process of data analysis, including categorizing the data in order to discover relationships between concepts as well as naming emergent categories, was explained briefly at the beginning of this chapter and more fully in Chapter 3 (pp. 86-88).

Teachers' perceptions about the purposes of education

Before delving more specifically into how study participants perceived the work of teaching, I will discuss their perceptions of the purpose of education. While one could

argue that teachers' perceptions about the purpose of education as a whole have no bearing on how they take up the specific work of teaching high school English, I argue teachers' conceptual views about the purpose of education serve as a philosophical foundation informing not only how they conduct the daily work of teaching, but also how those perceptions and experiences shape their professional identities. This represents a critical approach, where education is viewed as both a moral and social practice, which is historically located, culturally embedded, and ideologically shaped (Carr, 2015).

An initial analysis of the 47 unique responses from the three focus groups that represented teachers' perceptions about the purpose of education (Appendix F, Question 2) revealed that 85% of teachers viewed the overarching purpose of education in positive terms, while 15% viewed it in negative terms. To determine this, I relied on sentiment analysis using a dictionary-based approach in which words are assigned to convey positive, negative, or neutral sentiments using synonyms and antonyms as markers in identification (Liu, 2012). Of those whose responses could be categorized in positive terms, a minority of teachers, totaling 4% of responses, viewed the overall purpose of education as related to their subject area. These responses were concerned with imparting an *appreciation* of both language and literature. Overwhelmingly, positive responses across all three focus groups were centered on the larger values of being an educated person in society, developing a better understanding of one's self and the surrounding world, fostering a lifelong love of learning for learning's sake, and emphasizing the value of critical thinking, curiosity, and open mindedness. Further, these responses, in addition to those emerging from the survey data as illustrated on pp.

103-105, demonstrate teachers' perceptions and the importance they place on having a *personal sense of agency* as an intrinsic motivation for engaging in their work.

Teachers who viewed education in negative terms identified the purpose of education narrowly, making explicit connections to the *institution of school* as opposed to the broader philosophical concepts that guided the responses of those who viewed education in positive terms. These teachers identified school as an institution that serves as the *ultimate arbiter of knowledge*, dictating what and how information is taught. They also specifically cited the Common Core Standards (CCS) as a daunting "curriculum" that has altered not only what teachers teach, but also how they teach. One teacher said, "There's not enough creativity with Common Core ... it's set in stone: do it this way." Another said, "The Common Core doesn't say you can take a humorous approach or have the students write a poem if they wanted to. There is not enough clarification in it." These responses present a concern, because the CCS were intended to represent outcomes for learning, not dictate specific curricula. The CCS ELA Standards (National, 2010, p. 6) clarified this purpose:

The Standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. For instance, the use of play with young children is not specified by the Standards, but it is welcome as a valuable activity in its own right and as a way to help students meet the expectations in this document... The Standards must therefore be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum consistent with the expectations laid out in this document.

While the CCS offers suggestions for how the standards themselves might be met, teachers' responses indicated that the way the Standards have been implemented has been misrepresented or misinterpreted by school or district administration. As a result, I then categorized the teachers' responses according to the socioeconomic status of their schools of employment and discovered that teachers' responses differed according to the

type of school (working class, middle class, affluent class) where they work. While the majority of teachers responded positively, the extent to which their comments were positive and negative varied along socioeconomic lines, as Figure 13 (below) shows:

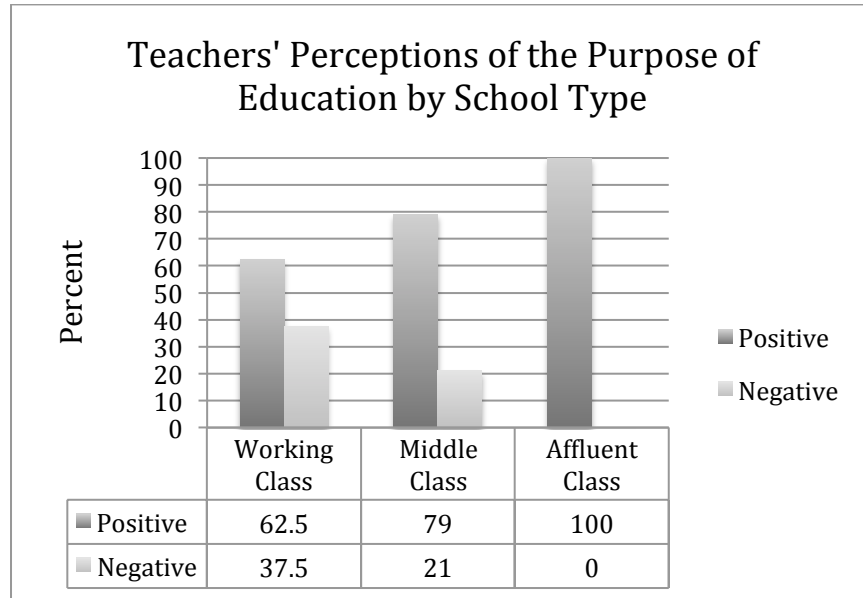


Figure 13. Focus group responses describing teachers' perceptions of the overall purpose of education varied according to the socioeconomic class of their school of employment. Teachers from the working class school had the fewest positive (62.5%) and most negative comments (37.5%); teachers from the middle class school had more positive (79%) than negative (21%) comments; while teachers from the affluent class school had the most positive (100%) and fewest negative (0%) comments.

This outcome, however, is not surprising given that scholarship has revealed differences between the schooling that occurs in working class, middle class, and affluent class schools, where working class schools adhere to rigid, prescribed curricula and teaching methodologies (Willis, 1977; Anyon, 1980; Weis, 2004). Teachers representing the working class school in this study confirmed this not only implicitly, through their criticism of their school's implementation of the CCS, as demonstrated above, but also explicitly, as seen in the tension and frustration they perceived on the job as resulting from administrative inexperience and high turnover. Essentially, many of

the working class school teachers felt that despite wanting and seeking administrative direction and guidance regarding meeting the Standards, they received little of either because their supervisors either had no teaching experience, or they had not been on the job long enough to understand the issues at hand to be in a position to offer guidance.

This can be contrasted with the substance of the negative views, albeit fewer, about education expressed by teachers at the middle class school, who did not identify inexperienced or unprepared administration as an issue. Rather, the middle class school teachers' negative views surrounding education resulted from their perception of school as an *institutional arbiter of knowledge*, where teachers had no choice but to deliver an education to students as dictated by the school's administrators. It was this group of teachers who acknowledged the CCS as a negative influence in how they felt about their work, but not because of a perceived lack of direction in how to implement, in contrast to what teachers from the working class school said. Instead, middle class school teachers expressed frustration and disdain over being "micromanaged" by school administrators who provided a county-written curriculum for high school English teachers, which was presented to teachers verbatim, eliminating not only the collaborative curriculum writing process the school district had traditionally used, but also sending a strong message to the middle class high school's English teachers that their expertise was no longer valued. Teachers from the middle class school were idealistic about education, viewing it as an opportunity to "help[] students figure out who they are," "broaden [students'] sense of the world," and "teach [students] about their responsibility as individuals in the larger society." At the same time, they also saw

education as a gate-keeping endeavor, where “school is an institutional filter” and “teachers are guardians of knowledge.”

Unlike teachers from the working and middle class schools, the teachers from the affluent class school presented their perceptions about the overall purpose of education and schooling exclusively in positive terms. Absent from this group’s responses was any talk about a perceived lack of autonomy in the classroom, commentary about frustration with the perceived competency or expertise of administration, or mention of having to teach to the standards. In contrast, 100% of the responses viewed education in positive terms, with 45% of responses identifying the importance of education as inspiring *lifelong learning* and *inquiry*; 30% emphasizing the importance of developing practical skills, such as *questioning*, *discussion*, and *analysis*; and 25% indicating the importance of being a good human being who is both *open minded* and *community oriented*.

While the affluent school’s teachers did suggest they had some of the same guidelines as the working and middle class schools’ teachers, such as having to follow standards and a specific curriculum, they also noted that they were given autonomy by their administrators in employing the teaching methodologies they saw as being most beneficial for their students (as opposed to being required to follow scripted lessons). In addition, affluent school teachers said they were afforded the freedom within their curriculum to choose texts they perceived would best allow them to utilize their specific content area interests and expertise while still meeting their curricular guidelines. Here, there was no talk about administrative micromanagement or frustrations with a school culture focused on meeting standards and on teachers preparing students to take

standardized tests. Even though the realities of being sure the standards are met and that students need to be prepared for standardized testing were no different for the affluent school's teachers as compared with the working and middle class schools' teachers, what was distinctively different about the experience of the affluent class teachers was how those expectations were expressed and expected to be implemented by the school's administrators. The affluent school's teachers identified that their administrators valued their expertise as professionals and, as such, gave them autonomy in making decisions about how to conduct the work of teaching high school English. Affluent school administrators were identified as partners with teachers, guiding them as necessary and supporting them as needed. This relationship, which will be explored further in this chapter, was undoubtedly instrumental in shaping the overwhelmingly positive perceptions about education the affluent school's teachers held.

Teachers' perceptions about teachers

To further understand the data that emerged from the study's initial survey regarding teachers' perceptions about the inherent qualities teachers possess (see pp. 104 – 108), focus group participants were also asked to identify words and phrases that describe the word *teacher*. As was the case during similar analysis of data from the survey, I analyzed focus group participants' responses to this question by grouping them into semantic domains to organize for patterns of sameness, categorizing the data as a means of identifying larger relationships and themes, and then naming the categories (Maxwell, 2005; Titscher et al., 2005; Charmaz, 2006). This data acquisition process also constituted a member check of the data from the survey, while also allowing for a more specific understanding of teachers' perceptions surrounding the work of teaching

high school English. To that effect, the following sub-sections will explore teachers' understandings about their work.

Perceptions of teacher. Focus groups were asked to respond to the question: *When you hear the word 'teacher,' what comes to mind?* Although teachers provided 45 unique responses, their responses fell into two distinct categories, the *personal* (51%) and the *professional* (49%), which was interesting given the open-ended question that was presented to them. For the purpose of this analysis, *personal* refers to words that describe an individual's *sense of being*, or *être*, illustrating qualities that comprise an individual's unique identity, while *professional* refers to words that describe an individual's *sense of interaction* with others as a professional, demonstrating qualities that support relational -- or interpersonal -- interactions, one might see when teachers are in their classrooms conducting their work (Day et al, 2006; O'Connor, 2008). Unlike the disparities that emerged regarding teachers' perceptions of the purposes of education according to the socioeconomic class of the school of the teacher's employment in the previous section, responses that fell into these categories was not only fairly equally divided, as seen in the percentage distribution above, but also demonstrated consistent representation across the three schools. The following sub-sections will discuss the specific findings of the two categories: *personal sense of being* and *professional sense of interaction*, representing both the personal and the interpersonal.

Personal sense of being. As stated above, this study defines *personal sense of being* as comprising the qualities that are unique to the individual teacher and that inform the individual teacher's sense of personal identity. These responses represent a majority (51%), albeit a slim majority, of those that emerged across the three focus

groups. The most common quality teachers identified represented the importance of the *personal value of learning*, with 48% of respondents indicating that teachers should have strong personal values favoring a love of learning, the pursuit of knowledge, and the value of intellectualism. One of the middle class school's teachers expressed this complexity when she said that teachers value

... the love of learning for learning's sake, which I feel is more and more difficult with standardized testing to be able to focus on ideas – being interested and wanting to know, to find out. I think that's really important. But also, just the idea that you can help students become the people they are going to be ... I think helping students to be able to do that ... those are the two most important things. It's about being a lifelong learner and seeing the value in that, and then just being a good human being.

Following this, teachers identified *idealism* (26%), *intellect* (17%), and *eccentricity* (9%) as words that best described the most important personal characteristics of teachers.

A teacher from the affluent class school offered the following about the work of teaching:

I don't know any [teacher] who isn't a little bit crazy, or just extremely optimistic and idealistic. Even in my lowest, most pessimistic mood, I'm like, 'I'm hating [teaching] so much, and I don't think I can do it for one more year' ... Then, I think, 'Well, who is gonna do it?' There are certain things about the job that I like so much, but who puts up with it? ... If you're smart, and you work hard, and you do all the things that are asked of us as teachers, there is no job that is harder. If I can be successful at this job, I don't think that there's another job on the planet that I wouldn't be successful at. But yet, it's gonna take me 10 years to make the same amount that my friends make with their starting pay. So, isn't that a little crazy? Yeah, I'm just gonna get up and go to work tomorrow. Teach the children, right?

In response to the above teacher's comment, a teacher from the working class school added, "We are definitely idealistic. We truly believe we are going to change the world. I truly believe that." Essentially, they felt that teachers, first and foremost, need to value the learning process, but, in addition, should possess the personal qualities that reflect a

strong sense of idealism about their work, the intellect to understand their work, and the frame of mind necessary to conduct their work. The combination of qualities that comprise the *personal sense of being* acts as a foundation supporting a teacher's *professional sense of interaction*, which will be discussed next.

Professional sense of interaction. While the *personal sense of being*, as described above, is foundational to the teacher's core personal values, the heart of the *professional sense of interaction* is relational in nature, yet also serves to inform teacher identity. Here, the majority of responses indicated that teachers have a professional responsibility to be emotionally supportive of their students (55%). Here, teachers commented about supporting students' emotional needs by "being willing to open up if you want your students to open up" and getting students "to know you're not just teaching for a paycheck, but that you truly care about what's going on in their life." In addition, others saw teachers in the capacity of serving as mentors (36%) who are able to guide students through the learning process. One teacher noted that teachers "have to be able to share – not just for modeling, but to demonstrate vulnerability and credibility in order to really get students interested in learning." To that end, a teacher from another focus group said that "when [a student] is failing every class and getting a C- in my class, then I know I'm doing something right," a comment with which two other teachers immediately agreed. The remaining responses (9%) were more vague about these interactions, identifying teachers as "wearing many hats at once," being "awakeners of dreams," or serving as "taskers" who assign students tasks to complete. It is important to note that all of the responses involving teachers' professional interactions involved only students, although, as Hargreaves (1998, 2001) identified, the work of teaching

involves interactions with many different groups, while recognizing relationships with students as those primary to teachers' work.

Perceptions of high school English teachers. Similar to the categories that emerged in the analysis of teachers' perceptions of the word *teacher*, as shown in the section above, responses from across the three focus groups surrounding the question *What kinds of qualities do effective (or good) English teachers have?* also identified a combination of the personal and professional in their understanding of the work of teaching high school English, with the most frequently identified responses demonstrating an equal division between teachers' individual qualities (the *personal*) and their professional interactions (the *interpersonal*). With a total of 88 unique responses, representing an average of 8 responses per focus group participant, the high school English teachers who participated in this part of the study offered significant contributions for this item, with multiple response terms across all three focus groups representing nearly 70% of these. The answers teachers provided were in the form of single words as well as anecdotal responses that emerged organically after I asked the initial question, with the teachers responding to each other's comments. Similar to a popcorn response, when one teacher would mention something, another teacher would jump in and add to what was said. The two paragraphs below will discuss the findings that represent each of the two categories. These findings are the result of analysis that focused on frequently occurring terms in response to the above question across the three focus group transcripts.

Personal qualities of high school English teachers. As indicated in the paragraph above, half of the responses teachers provided regarding their perceptions of the qualities inherent in effective high school English teachers were categorized as

pertaining to personal qualities. Of these, teachers identified four distinct personal qualities multiple times across the groups, with no disparities along socioeconomic lines. Teachers designated *passion*, *energy*, *flexibility* and *balance* as qualities they perceived effective high school English teachers have. All of these terms were the teachers' own words, generated organically and taken directly from the transcripts. Nearly 4 in 10 responses (38%) identified *passion* as the most important personal quality effective high school English teachers possess. Responses connected passion not only to the teacher's personal love for the subject matter, particularly literature and writing, but also to their individual desire to share their love of their subject matter through their work. Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that passion was an essential trait, "because otherwise those books can be deadly dull. You have to bring them to life." Similarly, a significant number, nearly 3 in 10 (28%), responded that successful high school English teachers are *energetic* in the way they conduct their work. One teacher from the affluent class school said,

You have to have energy. I mean, I have been a teacher when I have had a child [at home] that will not sleep, and I was not very well rested ... I think some people are just much better at bringing the energy all the time, because it sets you apart. When you can come in and be high energy, you can set the tone and have a relevant lesson that engages the students.

A slightly smaller number of responses (24%) said that effective high school English teachers tend to be *flexible* people who see the world in terms of the many gray shades of possibility, as opposed to bringing a more stringent either/or approach to the work of teaching. A teacher from the middle class school argued that being a good English teacher is a result of experience, but that they "also have to have a certain flexibility of character. You can't be someone who is a rigid 'my way or the highway' teacher. You

have to have the personal flexibility to adapt to the situation.” In addition to demonstrating flexibility surrounding their work, some teachers (10%) also mentioned that effective teachers are able to efficiently *balance* the many tensions that arise from their work in order to be successful. When a teacher from the affluent school said, “I think it’s a balance of expectations, to maintain your expectations and still have some flexibility to do what needs to get done,” a middle class teacher affirmed, “It is a balancing act.”

Professional qualities of high school English teachers. The professional qualities of effective high school English teachers focus group participants discussed can be divided into two distinct categories: *relationships* and *teaching practice*. Here, teachers indicated the importance of forging strong professional *relationships* with students and colleagues (41%) while maintaining consistently high standards regarding the *practice of teaching* (59%). Many teachers placed a high value on professional responsibilities related to relationship building, such as “learn[ing] every student’s name within the first week of school” and “car[ing] about students as people,” while also linking these interpersonal interactions with the ability to engage in elements of successful teaching, such as having high, yet realistic, expectations for student learning (35%), being able to engage and enlist students in critical questioning (14%), and having a solid command of the subject matter (10%).

The next section will explore the relationships that comprise teachers’ professional geographies by seeking to understand their perceptions concerning their social interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators.

Exploring the relationships that inform teachers’ professional geographies

The preliminary focus group data presented above was based on teachers' perceptions about education, the work of teaching, and the specific task of teaching high school English. It created a foundation for understanding the perspectives that inform teachers' emotional geographies, which are culture-bound, subjective, and active representations of their experience (Hargreaves, 2001, pp. 1061-1062). Defined by the patterns of closeness and distance that represent the many interactions in which teachers engage, these relationships "create, configure and color the feelings and emotions [teachers] experience about [them]selves, [their] world and each other" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1061). Hargreaves' concept of professional geographies is a framework for developing a solid understanding of how teachers perceive themselves as professionals, and the many relationships in which they engage are at the core of this understanding. This section will consider the findings about how teachers' perceptions regarding their relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators inform their professional identities.

Perceptions of relationships with students. Focus group participants were asked three questions to probe their perceptions regarding the nature of these relationships. First, they were asked to *discuss their perceptions of a teacher's role in the classroom*. Then, they were asked *how they thought their students would describe them as a teacher*. Finally, they were asked *how they thought their students would describe them as an individual*. Based on the survey data that emerged during the initial phase of the study, teachers indicated an overwhelmingly positive response regarding their relationships with their students as demonstrated by nearly 95% who said they viewed their relationships with students as either *good* or *very good*. Going into the focus group

interviews, I wondered if this large percentage would be replicated, as it seemed their positive response percentage was extraordinarily high. At the same time, recent research indicates that teachers who are satisfied with their jobs report a high quality of relationship with their students (Veldman et al., 2013). Similarly, research has also shown that the reason most teachers engage in the profession because of their altruistic desire to contribute to the development of young people and the improvement of society (van Uden et al., 2013). Although this study did not ask teachers about their overall job satisfaction, teachers in this study did say they became teachers to help others (see p. 112). Nevertheless, it may be entirely possible that social pressure in the focus group format dictated a positive response from participants, because teaching is a people profession, and what teacher would want to self-identify as not liking students in a court of her peers? In actuality, there is no way to assess whether or not teachers were conveying their true perceptions regarding their relationships with students. However, given that 95% of teachers reported their relationships with students to be *good* or *very good*, it is still very likely that the majority of teachers were forthright in sharing their perceptions.

Although teachers were asked these questions discretely, their responses were not defined or limited by the questions themselves. Instead, teachers' responses demonstrated the inextricably complex nature of how they perceive their relationships with students. For example, several teachers across focus groups identified the role of the teacher in the classroom (Question 1) as being the facilitator for building relationships, yet others named the act of building relationships with students as one of the ways their students would describe them as a teacher (Question 2), while still others

said students would speak about them as individuals who engaged in relationship building (Question 3).

Given the amount of crossover that emerged from teachers' responses regarding their relationships with students, I was nevertheless able to place their perceptions within three categories tangential to the initial questions presented above: *the role of the teaching professional*, *teachers' professional values*, and *teachers' personal values*. Responses were consistent across all focus groups, as well as across the three representative schools by socioeconomic class. The paragraphs below will discuss these findings further.

The role of the teaching professional. Similar to teachers' perceptions concerning the umbrella topic of the *purposes of education* (see p. 116), teachers also viewed their broad role as teaching professionals in overwhelmingly positive terms that focused on the role of the teaching professional as an entity who is actively engaged in the work of teaching. The roles of active engagement teachers identified are represented by the following three categories: *relationship builder*, *learning facilitator*, and *co-learner*.

Every teacher in every focus group identified her role as a *relationship builder* in the classroom as being at the heart of her understanding of what a teaching professional does. Within this category, responses varied, with six teachers explicitly stating that building relationships with students was important to them. Additional responses in this category expressed various implicit connections to relationship building, where teachers stressed the importance of being able to *empathize* (4 unique responses), *laugh* (6 unique

responses), *communicate* (3 unique responses), and *interact* (2 unique responses) with their students.

Teachers' perceptions placed the building of relationships at the core of their understanding of the role of the teacher. This provided a solid foundation based on interpersonal interactions that informed their understanding of the role of the teacher as a *learning facilitator*. While this category did not emerge as prominently as *relationship building*, with five teachers specifically citing its importance, teachers agreed that a vital part of their work is to facilitate the learning of their students, a view supported by the scholarship of Freire (2007) and Vygotsky (1987).

The final element that emerged from this area was teachers' understanding that they function as *co-learners* who are engaged in an educational journey along with their students. Here, teachers in each focus group valued the collaborative nature of the learning, and perceived their roles as teacher-guides who help students navigate the learning process while also enriching teachers' own learning. One teacher represented this view simply, yet profoundly, stating, "We're in this together," demonstrating the strong connection teachers feel they have with their students surrounding their role as professionals in the learning process. Although this category provided good insight into teachers' overall perceptions about their role as teaching professionals, their responses also indicated insight into the areas of classroom interaction that constituted their professional values, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Teachers' professional values. As stated in the previous paragraph, teachers' perceptions about their relationships with students also centered on what they valued in the course of daily classroom interactions, representing their *professional values*. While

one teacher representing the upper class school said, “It looks different for different teachers,” four areas emerged with considerable support across the focus groups and school types: *motivation*, *choice*, *voice*, and *self-advocacy*. Interestingly, when teachers discussed their perceptions of how students view the work of teaching in their classrooms, the conversation seemingly shifted to one that exemplified what teachers valued as positive traits in the scope of engaging in the *act* of teaching. Foremost, teachers perceived that their students valued their attempts at *motivation* (8 unique responses), essentially that they engage students in a variety of ways – including using hands-on projects, technology, and inquiry -- aimed at motivating them to learn. Following *motivation*, six teachers perceived their students valued *choice* in the classroom, which included items like giving students choices in regard to their reading assignments, writing assignments, and research directions. Along with *choice*, teachers also discussed their perceptions of the importance of giving students a *voice* in their classroom (5 unique responses), valuing giving students opportunities to express themselves in activities such as discussions, writing conferences, and presentations. Similar to the idea that teachers motivate their students to learn, they also indicated the importance of supporting and facilitating *self-advocacy* with their students (4 unique responses). Teachers expressed the value of providing a classroom environment where students felt safe not only to take risks in their thinking, but also to be able to advocate for themselves based on their thinking. Beyond the professional values that emerged in this conversation about relationships with students, other responses in this area highlighted teachers’ personal values that inform these relationships, which will be discussed next.

Teachers' personal values. In addition to the professional values that informed teachers' perceptions about their relationships with students, a significant number of responses (17) indicated that teachers' work is informed by the values they hold individually. In this category, teachers' responses were grouped according to three specific values: being *flexible* (8), having a *strong sense of self* (5), and *caring for others* (4). Also, the most frequently used term here, *flexibility*, was identified by teachers when they spoke about the qualities of effective high school teachers (see p. 123), providing further evidence of their beliefs about how this characteristic informs their perceptions about teaching. Moreover, teachers also said that having a *strong sense of self* was an important characteristic in their relationships with students. Robbins (2012) defined sense of self as "the ability to distinguish one's own values from those of any outside persuasions, and to do so well enough to be able to protect those ideals from unwanted external influence" (p. ii). For the teachers in this study, having a strong sense of self was further defined as being "vulnerable" and "real" with students. One teacher said, "You have to know what you're about as a person in order to feel secure enough to be vulnerable with your students. They pick up on that and respect you for it," essentially describing this personal trait as one that is vital in establishing strong relationships with students. As was the case with *flexibility*, teachers also explained the importance of *caring* for their students, a quality that also emerged from the survey data when teachers were asked to provide one word students would use to describe them (see p. 112), again demonstrating the significance of Noddings' (1984) ethic of care.

Perceptions of relationships with parents. Although survey data showed that teachers viewed their relationships with parents in relatively positive terms, with 83% indicating *good* or *very good*, these findings also demonstrated their relationships as more distant than those with students, colleagues, or administrators (see pp. 120-124). That said, commentary about the nature of teachers' relationships with parents exceeded the commentary made about any of the three other groups, with teachers speaking emphatically – and in great detail -- about the good, the bad, and the ugly concerning these interactions. Focus group participants were asked three questions to elicit their perceptions about relationships between teachers and parents. First, they were asked to describe their *perceptions of the relationships between parents and teachers*. Next, they were asked to *consider how their students' parents would describe them as professionals*. Finally, teachers were asked to discuss how they thought their *students' parents would describe them as individuals*, apart from their professional identities. The next section will explore the broad continuum that represents teachers' perceptions regarding their relationships with parents, as identified across the three focus groups and school types.

Exploring the teacher-parent interaction continuum. While most teachers viewed their interactions with parents in positive terms, validating the data that emerged from the survey, the focus group format provided a venue for further exploration and delineation regarding these relationships. In fact, the majority of teachers said their interactions with parents were very positive. In their conversations, teachers identified three distinct parent *types*, each representing unique interpersonal, or relational, dynamics: *the hyperinvolved parent*, *the supportive parent*, and *the uninvolved parent* (see Figure 10 below).

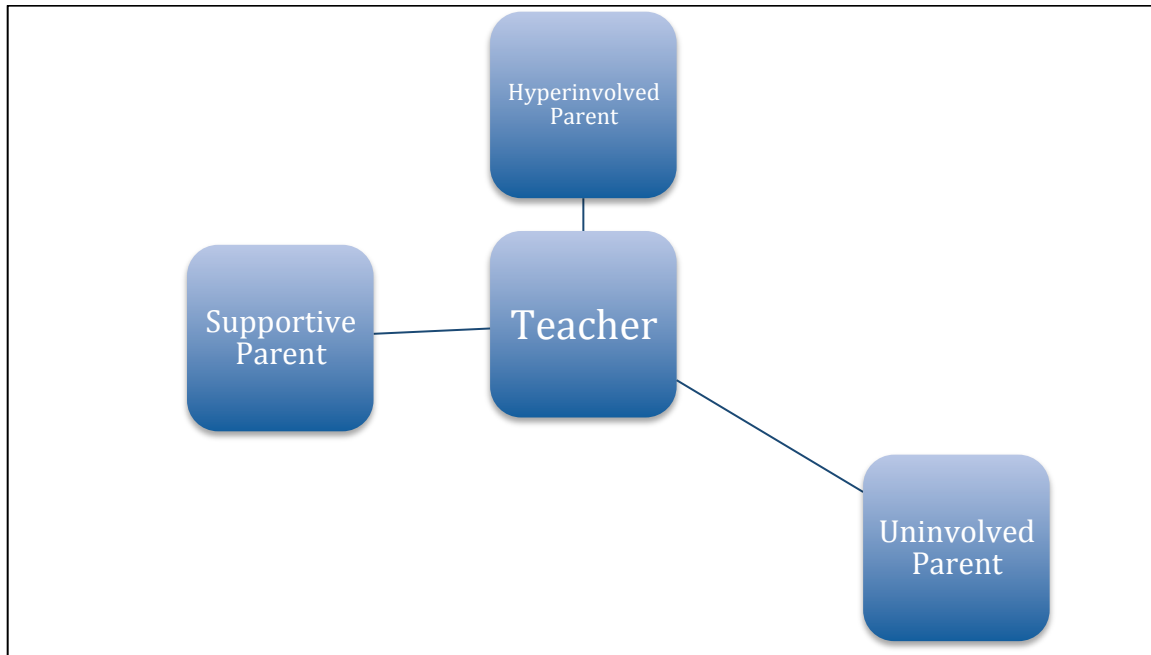


Figure 14. The graphic above is an illustration that visually represents the three types of parents with whom teachers engage in the course of their work, and also demonstrates a visual representation of their closeness to or distance from each type of parent (Hargreaves, 2001).

Figure 10 illustrates teachers' perceived relationships with parents in several ways. First, the teacher is placed at the center of the graphic because this research was concerned with the extent to which teachers' perceptions and understandings of their work are informed by the many relationships in which they engage (in this case, their relationships with parents). Next, the three types of parents teachers identified in the focus group interviews are represented as unique relationships with the teacher. Teachers indicated no interaction among the types of parents. Instead, their conversations focused on their own individual interactions with parents, acknowledging "a whole spectrum [of types of parents]." Further, the visual placement of parent types is also representative of how teachers viewed each interaction differently in terms of closeness and distance. Each of these relationships will be described in greater detail below.

Hyperinvolved parents. The most frequent topic of discussion about relationships with parents that emerged from the focus group interviews centered around what I have identified as teachers' concerns about the *hyperinvolved* parent, a type they referred to as the "helicopter parent." Teachers spoke emphatically and at length about interactions with these parents, revealing a broad continuum of emotional responses that underscore the complexity of human interaction. Although teachers' relationships with parents tend to be the most distant as compared with their relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators, entities with whom they interact daily, they perceived their relationship with hyperinvolved parents as requiring more of their energy and time than their relationships with *supportive parents* or *uninvolved parents*. This is shown in Figure 7 by both the placement of the *hyperinvolved parent* entity hovering above the *teacher* entity, as well as the length of the interaction line, which is the shortest of the three parent types and indicative of the close level of contact teachers have with hyperinvolved parents.

Nevertheless, teachers defined their relationship with hyperinvolved parents with mixed emotions. Many teachers used the pejorative phrase "control freaks" to describe hyperinvolved parents, initially focusing on negative interactions. To begin, teachers agreed that in their experience hyperinvolved parents tended to "blame teachers and the school, but not their student" when students did not measure up to parents' expectations. Teachers also noted that hyperinvolved parents' expectations of both their student and their student's teacher bordered on the unrealistic, expressing concern over parents who constantly check online grade books, emailing teachers immediately if a child earned lower grades than expected on assignments, with the expectation of immediate response,

grade justification, and mollification from hyperinvolved parents, resulting in what teachers perceived to be a consistent tension and stress. One teacher said, “In the age of standards-based grading, teachers need to be able to justify every grade they give. This is problematic, because [justifications for grades] must be entered into the online grade book as well.” Here, the teacher’s concern was the limiting nature of the online grade book’s comment features, which she felt – and others agreed – that these brief comments lacked the ability to engage in direct, specific communication with parents regarding their students’ performance. Having proactive, direct communication with parents was something teachers across all focus groups agreed was important, particularly given the immediate access parents have to their students’ online grade book, a feature teachers from all three schools used in the course of their work. In contrast, however, teachers also demonstrated a sense of understanding regarding hyperinvolved parents’ behavioral motivations, viewing them as parents who ultimately “want the best for their kids,” while at the same time struggling with maintaining what teachers perceive to be appropriate boundaries concerning their involvement in their students’ education.

Supportive parents. Of the three parent types that emerged from teachers’ discussions about their relationships with their students’ parents, teachers were most connected to the parents they perceived to be supportive of both their student’s learning and the teacher’s role in managing positive learning outcomes. Teachers overwhelmingly viewed *supportive parents* as partners in the educational process of students, understanding the relationship between students, teachers, and parents to be “like a three-legged stool,” where the contributions of each were considered equal and necessary for learning. The nature of this relationship is also expressed in the visual

placement of *Supportive Parent* in Figure 7, with this type of parent situated close – but not too close – to the teacher, yet also horizontally on par with the teacher, demonstrating teachers’ perceptions of the strength of partnership without the smothering qualities they viewed in their relationships with hyperinvolved parents.

Even as teachers expressed a disdain for the excessive closeness in their relationship with hyperinvolved parents, oftentimes fearing their anger or combativeness, they embraced the appropriateness of the relationship of closeness with supportive parents, overwhelmingly emphasizing the value of the positive communications with these parents, whom teachers tended to view as equal partners. In fact, the term *partners* was used by teachers across the three schools and focus groups to describe teachers’ perceptions about this relationship, placing the supportive parent as the type with whom teachers overwhelmingly preferred to work. In contrast to the perception of their interactions with hyperinvolved parents, which centered on tension and pressure teachers felt from this relationship, teachers expressed an appreciation for supportive parents. Regarding this dynamic, one teacher said, “[Supportive parents] won’t bargain for a grade. They’ll just listen and then deal with their child at home. These parents are just very honest and lay it all out.” A teacher from the working class school said, “You always appreciate those parents who are supportive of teachers and hold students accountable – they have good communication and a discussion of expectations with students at home,” a comment with which teachers from both the middle and upper class schools agreed. Beyond this, teachers voiced that they tended to be more understanding of students whose parents they perceived to be supportive, perhaps because their

interactions with supportive parents constitute a healthy closeness, as understood by Hargreaves' (2001), within the relational dynamic.

Uninvolved parents. Focus group participants spoke about parents they perceived to be uninvolved in their students' education with both frustration and understanding. Though their expressions concerning uninvolved parents were not as impassioned as those they voiced regarding hyperinvolved parents, teachers nevertheless showed concern for the *uninvolved parent*. As Figure 7 illustrates, of the three types of parent relationships the *uninvolved parent* represents a relational dynamic that is the most distant and detached from the teacher. As was the case with *hyperinvolved* and *supportive parent* types, teachers from all three schools identified and spoke about their interactions with the *uninvolved parent*, with these conversations centering on the value of communication and how the uninvolved parent contributed to this dynamic.

According to teachers, communication with the uninvolved parent can be challenging for a number of reasons. While parent calls or other communication (email, letter) are vital to teachers' work, particularly those teachers who support students with special education needs, working class and middle class school teachers said that the act of communicating with some parents via a working phone number, email/computer accessibility, or valid home address could be difficult to impossible (the teachers representing the upper class school did not mention special education students or issues with not being able to contact parents). One working class teacher "makes every attempt – phone, email, home visit – to connect and reach out to parents," oftentimes with no result. In addition to structural hurdles, communication with uninvolved parents may be more difficult because, teachers agreed, "Many parents are used to receiving

negative communications about their students, which makes it even more important to attempt proactive, positive communication.” But even when such communications are successful, a teacher from the middle class school said, “The parents of a lot of my students are intimidated by schools, so they don’t answer [calls] or don’t show up [to IEPs]. It usually takes some coaxing [to get them to even come to school].” In spite of experiencing communications issues with some parents, however, teachers viewed interactions with parents as opportunities for positive dialogue supporting student success. Building on their interactions with hyperinvolved, supportive, and uninvolved parents, the next section will discuss teachers’ understanding of parents’ perceptions of their roles as professionals.

How parents view teachers’ professional qualities. Given the results of the survey in which teachers identified a combination of professional and personal qualities to reflect their understanding about parents’ perceptions about them, the second focus group interview question, asking *how parents would describe teachers as professionals*, produced discussion along similar lines. The words teachers used to describe how they thought parents viewed them as professionals were almost exclusively positive, with the exception of one: *unreasonable*. A teacher from the middle class school explained her response as being in the context of an ongoing parent dispute about a plagiarism comment the teacher had included as part of her online grade book in connection with a writing assignment where the student had not attributed large amounts of text taken from an Internet source. While the parent acknowledged the student’s plagiarism and agreed that the student should have a reduced grade as a result, the parent vehemently disagreed with the teacher using the word *plagiarism* as a comment to justify the lower grade,

because it was part of an electronic document the parent feared could be seen by college recruiters (it could not). As a result, the teacher viewed this parent, at this time, given this circumstance, as calling her professionally *unreasonable*.

In contrast, all of the other words teachers used to describe how they thought parents viewed them as teaching professionals were positive. Teachers said that parents viewed them as being staunch *student advocates* who work tirelessly to ensure student learning and student success. Further, teachers indicated that parents view them as *supportive* partners with parents who maintain regular, positive *communication* with them. The next paragraph will discuss how teachers perceive their students' parents would describe their personal qualities.

How parents view teachers' personal qualities. Similar to the findings in the section above, teachers' responses centered on how parents perceive their personal qualities corroborated the words teachers provided in the survey. Again, teachers across the three focus groups and schools provided exclusively positive terms to describe how they thought parents viewed them as individuals – their personal qualities. Here, teachers said parents would describe them as *positive, strong, energetic, passionate, helpful, and caring*. The words teachers provided demonstrate that teachers maintain a positive overall view of how parents perceive their personal qualities.

Perceptions of relationships with colleagues. While the survey data showed teachers perceived their relationships with parents least positively of the four groups (students, parents, colleagues, and administrators), perhaps due to their lack of daily interaction and physical distance, they expressed their relationships with colleagues most positively after their relationships with students, with 86.5% of teachers indicating a *good* or *very*

good relationship with their colleagues. Interestingly, even though survey participants placed their views within this range, the responses in the focus groups were much more nuanced, lending further understanding to this area of relational interaction. Overall, the findings point to the importance of a school's culture in how teachers view not only their colleagues, but also their administrators (which will be addressed separately in the next section). In addition to the survey data, focus group participants were asked to respond to the following to elicit their views about relationships with colleagues: 1) *Does your view of the ideal relationship between colleagues represent the ideal?* 2) *How would your colleagues describe you as a teacher?* and 3) *How would your colleagues describe you as an individual?* The following paragraphs will discuss these findings.

Understanding collegial relationships. Before considering how teachers represented their collegial relationships, it is necessary to bring attention to a point that emerged from teachers representing the three schools: essentially, that all collegial relationships are affected by the unique culture of the school. Most of the teachers in the focus groups had worked in different buildings over the course of their tenure as teachers, and were quick to acknowledge that administrative direction and the chemistry among the personalities of teachers affected the relational dynamics among teachers. Additionally, mid-career and late-career teachers also indicated that the dynamics of collegial interaction also changed over time in response to changes in staffing, administration, and school focus, particularly as it concerned relatively new teacher evaluations. Although teachers value collaboration with colleagues, teachers representing all three schools said that the natural tendency to collaborate with peers was being negatively affected by new evaluation systems, which, teachers said, numerically

rank teachers according to their classroom success, causing teachers to turn away from collaborating for fear of being evaluated lower than someone with whom she collaborated on a lesson or teaching strategy. “It’s been my experience [with the new evaluation system] that you’re pitted against each other,” said one teacher from the affluent school. The next two sections will discuss teachers’ perceptions of how their colleagues view their professional and personal qualities.

How colleagues view teachers’ professional qualities. While the survey data showed that teachers overwhelmingly described their relationships with colleagues in terms of how they take up their work in almost exclusively positive terms (see pp. 121-124), focus group discussions revealed mostly positive, with some negative, views of how teachers understand their professional relationships with colleagues. Nevertheless, positive views about professional relationships outnumbered negative views by more than two to one, with 14 positive comments and 6 negative. That said, half of all positive comments (7) identified the word *collaborative* to describe the nature of collegial relationships, with *focused* (3), *knowledgeable* (2), and *supportive* (2) following. Again, these identifications describe both teachers’ perceptions about how their colleagues perceive them as professionals, as well as how they perceive their colleagues as professionals. Of the six comments that showed a negative professional relationship among colleagues, responses were divided between being *non-collaborative* (3) and *inflexible* (3). When speaking about a non-collaborative colleague, one teacher said her colleague’s relationship with her was “parasitic,” where the colleague did not contribute to collaborative work efforts and relied on others to do his work.

How colleagues view teachers' personal qualities. As stated above, teachers' responses regarding their perceptions of interactions with colleagues were almost exclusively situated in the professional realm. When given the opportunity to discuss teachers' perceptions about how their colleagues would view them as individuals – their personal qualities – responses, while limited, were exclusively positive. Teachers said their colleagues would describe them as *honest, courteous, respectful, and open-minded*. It is also important to note here that focus group participants also spoke highly about their colleagues, calling them “good people,” “nice people,” and saying, “I like them.” I found this interesting, especially because some teachers discussed the professionalism of their colleagues quite differently, as shown in the previous paragraph.

Perceptions of relationships with administrators. As discussed in the previous section, focus group respondents across the three schools indicated that their administrators set the tone for the building's culture. Teachers said that building administrators, particularly the ones who evaluated them, determined not only the educational philosophy that directed the school, but also the extent to which teachers felt supported in their work regarding instructional strategies, resources, and student discipline. Teachers representing the working class school pointed to a consistent and frequent administrative turnover, where principals would come to their school near the end of their careers to take advantage of premium pay which would then be reflected in their retirement pension formula. Teachers from the working class school attributed a distinct lack of direction or frequent change in philosophy to fostering a building culture that was continually in flux. On the other hand, teachers representing the affluent class school experienced a completely different administrative dynamic, where there was

administrative consistency in personnel and philosophy over time due to administrators “coming up in the ranks” and reaching their positions after being teachers in the same building culture.

While teachers’ perceptions of relationships with administrators included more *average* and *poor* designations in the survey, only 40% indicated the relationship as *very good*, showing that relationships with administrators tend to be viewed more favorably than relationships with parents (see pp. 122-124). Moreover, the language teachers used to describe their relationships with administrators represented a combination of positive and negative qualities, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

How teachers perceive their administrators. When asked to describe how they viewed their administrators, focus group participants had both positive and negative views, with the positive outweighing the negative by a ratio of 4:1. Teachers who described their relationship with their administrators in positive terms said they were *approachable, supportive, friendly, caring, and open-minded*. Conversely, teachers who described their administrators in negative terms distinctly noted the problematic nature of their *administrators never having worked as teachers*. As such, teachers valued the importance of administrators having classroom teaching experience as a means of having a better, fairer understanding of the work of teachers, particularly considering that administrators also evaluate teacher efficacy. The other prominent negative quality teachers used to describe their administrators was *micromanaging*, where teachers felt the administrator was trying to control everything the teacher does, essentially devaluing their work.

How administrators view teachers' qualities. Although teachers were asked to describe how they thought their administrators perceived them both professionally and personally, teachers' responses were solely situated in the professional realm, with all of their comments applying to how they take up the work of teaching and not how their administrators viewed their personal qualities. That said, teachers' comments in this regard were exclusively positive. Teachers said their administrators *valued their professional judgment*. As a result, they said they said their administrators trusted them to apply their knowledge autonomously. Furthermore, teachers said their administrators professionally encouraged them to use their subject area and classroom expertise to not only innovate in their own classrooms, but to share their knowledge with others by taking on leadership roles both in the English department, in their schools, and in their school districts.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the study's findings as they related to the data collected from both the initial survey and the three focus group interviews. The findings are in support of the following questions that guided the research:

1. In what ways does the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching?
2. How do the interrelated discourses of gender and class inform emotional geographies and shape female high school English teachers understanding of their professional identities.

The chapter began with a holistic description of study participants (n=37; f=29; m=8) guided by the responses received from the initial survey. The gender of survey participants mirrored previous research, validating study participant percentages as being similar to that of the larger population of teachers (Aud et al., 2012). Further, survey participants reported socioeconomic identification also confirmed research that places teaching as a solid middle class profession (Snyder, 2014). In addition, the age and experience reported by teachers through the survey correlated fairly closely with NCES data for public school teachers (Snyder, 2014).

Due to the nature of the survey, which included both female and male teachers, the data teachers reported allowed me to understand some similarities and differences in the data according to gender. For example, the grade levels taught by each gender was similar with the exception of teachers of the 12th grade, where male teachers taught significantly more classes in this grade than female teachers did. Further, female teachers taught more special education class than their male counterparts, yet male teachers taught more general education English classes than female teachers. In terms of teachers' reported involvement beyond the school day in school related activities, female and male teachers indicated similar levels of involvement – both in the eighty-percentile range. At the same time, female teachers reported spending more time at home on the work of teaching – planning and grading – than their male counterparts. In understanding teachers' motivations for engaging in the work of teaching, more female teachers said they became teachers due to reasons of personal interest, while more male teachers said that became teachers for reasons of personal agency.

Because all three focus groups were comprised exclusively of female teachers, I was able to analyze data along socioeconomic lines, specifically according to the socioeconomic class of the school where the teacher taught. The benefit of this is that it removed certain variables from consideration, mainly gender and the teacher's reported socioeconomic class (all respondents placed themselves in the middle class), allowing me to understand any differences that might emerge according to where the teacher taught. Here, I found that teachers' perceptions of the purpose of education were significantly different depending of the socioeconomic class of the school, with working class school teachers exhibiting the most negative responses (37.5%), followed by the middle class school teachers (21%) and the affluent class school teachers (0%). Essentially, the affluent school's teachers reported their views of education in exclusively positive terms, whereas teachers from the other two schools did not, but in varied degrees, with the middle class school teachers falling between the two others. However, I also found that teachers' perceptions about what it means to be a teacher were consistent across socioeconomic lines.

Lastly, when analyzing the survey and focus group data in order to understand teachers' emotionality, I found that their perceptions varied according to Hargreaves' (2001) concepts of closeness and distance. Entities with whom teachers had the most closeness were the ones they indicated as having the most positive relationships, with students ranking the closest, followed by colleagues, parents, and administrators.

As this chapter discussed the findings related to the first two phases of the research study – the survey and the focus group interviews – the next chapter will further delve into the experience of teachers representing each of the three high schools

with narratives that provide further insight into the perceptions of female high school English teachers.

CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDY FINDINGS

Overview

In this chapter, I will examine the findings that emerged from three individual interviews I conducted with teachers representing each of the three types of schools as defined by Anyon (1980, 1981): working class, middle class, and affluent class. To review from Chapter 3, I chose the focus schools using a strategy called criterion-based selection, where the research sites “possess characteristics that match those of interest to the researcher” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 113). Selection was based on state mandated transparency reporting as reported on school websites, United States Census (2010) data, as well as community and district information from the National Center for Education Statistics’ *School District Demographics System (SDDS)* (Aud et al., 2012). Further information describing the class distinctions and criteria are described in Chapter 3 (pp. 73-74).

Specifically, I will use the findings from Chapter 4, which represented the perceptions of participants in both the survey and the focus group interviews, as the basis for developing a more nuanced understanding of the ways the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers’ perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching. Because these teachers conduct their work in different schools that are socioeconomically diverse from each other, the discussion in this chapter will also probe the extent to which social class – in this case, the social class of each representative school -- informs the teachers’ understanding of their professional identities.

The purpose of conducting three individual interviews corresponding with the socioeconomic class of the school of employment for each teacher was to unveil subtleties of analysis that may have gone otherwise unnoticed (see p. 84). The female teachers who participated in the focus group interviews were selected for individual interviews based on three criteria: 1) their willingness to participate in an hour-long individual interview; 2) the socioeconomic status of their school of employment; and 3) the extent to which their responses in the focus group interviews revealed their ability to contribute insightful, detailed narratives about their experiences as high school English teachers. The three teachers who participated in the individual semi-structured interviews represented a typical sample from each school (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, pp. 431-432). To that end, none of the teachers selected were in the same focus group or school of origin to ensure a unique representation of experience. The study of these teachers, one from each school type (working class, middle class, and affluent class), represented a multiple case study that allowed the cultivation of thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and produced compelling data that lends itself to generalization (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

In each of the three case studies, I begin with a description of the school's demographics followed by the teacher's perceptions about the school and its culture. This is followed by a description of the teacher's background and experience. To ensure anonymity, I identified teachers using pseudonyms. Next, each case study is divided into two main sections: *perceptions about the work of teaching* and *perceptions about relationships*, with each containing several subsections. The section addressing teachers' perceptions about the work of teaching discusses teachers' general views about the

profession, as well as the extent to which teachers feel they have control over their curriculum (what they teach) and their methodology (how they teach). Further, the section addressing teachers' perceptions as informed by their relationships presents teachers' views of their interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators.

Working Class School – Francesca

School demographic information. Working Class High School (WCHS) is classified as a large suburban high school (Aud et al., 2012) situated in a working class community with family income averaging about \$32,000 per year (United States Census, 2010). Nearly two-thirds of students at the school, representing about 63%, receive free or reduced lunch (Aud et al., 2012). The school's total enrollment is about 1600 students.

Teacher background and experience. Francesca has been a teacher of English, working primarily with special education students, in predominantly urban and working class schools in and around a major industrial midwestern city for approximately 16 years. Her experience includes teaching English at several charter schools in urban and suburban areas, a stint teaching at an urban high school that is part of a state-created education district, as well as her current position teaching in a large suburban working class high school. At the time of the interview, Francesca was also teaching summer school credit recovery courses in English at Working Class High School.

Francesca's formative years were spent in a working class, inner-ring suburb of a major industrial midwestern city, where her parents sent her to a private, Catholic school for grades K-8, a positive experience she attributed as pivotal in developing her skill and passion for the English language. After this, her parents decided to relocate the family

to an outer-ring suburb of the same midwestern city. Formerly a resort community, this outer-ring suburb is considered a bedroom community, where the majority of its 3000 middle class residents commute to jobs in the city. Francesca's parents decided to move to this community "because they wanted more of a middle class upbringing" for her. It was here that she attended and graduated from the local high school.

Always a successful student, she attended a four-year university not far from her home, "because [she] wasn't ready yet to launch completely away from [her] family." After two years of study, she transferred to a larger state university about an hour drive from her family's home, where she completed a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology, an area that interested her because of her love of people. In Francesca's words:

That was my very first Bachelor's. And I came out of that and really didn't have a career choice. I was like, 'I want to be an anthropologist.' So I ended up working in a bank cubicle. Horrible. Hated every second of it. I was like, oh my gosh ...

Having come from a working class family with middle class aspirations, her family emphasized the importance of a college education, but they were not able to provide her with the guidance she needed to prepare for a career. "I just studied what interested me, even though it wasn't necessarily practical for getting a job. People always told me to study what I love," she said. Francesca's experience in this regard is representative of Hargreaves' (2001) sociocultural geography, where the cultural experiences of the individual are not necessarily consistent with those outside of her own knowledge and experience. In her case, the expectations both she and her family had for career guidance were class-bound and limited due to their lack of knowledge about the process university study.

Upon the recommendation of her grandmother and a friend of the family – which is consistent with findings presented in Chapter 4, where over 90% of respondents indicated this type of *professional encouragement* as the primary *extrinsic motivation* for teaching (see p. 115) -- Francesca left the bank cubicle and entered the education profession as a substitute teacher. She described how she felt when she started teaching:

So I started subbing. From the first time I got into a classroom, I was like, 'Oh, oh, okay.' *Then I realized that this is probably what I was meant to do.* So, I got a job at a charter school and worked under an emergency permit while I went and got another bachelor's [degree]. I subbed for two years, but I was in my very own classroom after that. With the emergency permit, you are allowed to teach in urban settings, so I taught in [a large urban midwestern city] while getting my bachelor's in English with a minor in Speech and my secondary teaching certificate at [a local university].

After receiving her initial teacher credential, and while still teaching full time, Francesca applied to graduate school, where she obtained a Master's degree in Education with a concentration in Special Education. As a result, she is currently certified to teach secondary courses in English, Speech, and Special Education, specifically qualified to work with students who have various learning disabilities.

Francesca began her tenure at WCHS after having served as a substitute teacher in an urban school, a full time English teacher at three different charter schools (one urban and two inner-ring suburban), and a full time English teacher at an urban high school that was part of a state-created education district. During her time at these schools, she saw the effects of extreme poverty on her students, some of whom she provided with food, clothing, and emotional support. In addition, at one school, she was confronted with "intense gang violence," which made her decision to apply at WCHS "a no-brainer." It was these experiences with her students, their families, and their communities that informed her professional geography and ultimately led to her move to

WCHS. A friend of hers knew about an opening at WCHS and passed along her resume to the school's administration. As Francesca told it,

My friend said, 'Give me your resume.' And that's how I got into [WCHS]. He said, 'Oh my god, you are amazing at teaching English.' I also had that special ed[ucation] cert[ification], which is what I think they were looking for.

During the hiring process, she was interviewed by two people, the principal and the department chair for the special education department and received a phone call the next day offering her the position. In spite of having had some trying experiences at the urban high school where she had been teaching, including concerns about "my personal safety in the building, as well as my car's personal safety in the parking lot," Francesca's decision to leave that school was difficult, because she "really love[d] urban teaching." In the end, after discussions with her significant other, she accepted the position at WCHS. Part of her decision had to do with the security that came with a position in public education – the urban high school position she left did not offer job security for teachers, and she was not interested in pursuing educational administration. Having worked in a variety of high schools, Francesca was very specific when asked to describe WCHS:

It's incredibly diverse. If you read on paper, it will say it's 80% white, but we have a lot of Hispanic students, African American students, and Asian students. I think it's diverse. It's diverse with multiculturalism. What I find interesting, though, is that in my LRC classes [Learning Resource Classes] – the special education classes – there is definitely a larger population of multicultural students than white students. I think that a lot of times those kids might have gotten pushed into special ed[ucation] due to absenteeism or behavior. When I'm looking through the records, I'm seeing diagnoses like ADD or ADHD, and so they got put into the special ed[ucation] program. There is definitely a high concentration of boys. This past year, in just my LRC classes, I had eight girls and 25 boys. Boys are wiggly, and they wiggle a lot, so if you don't keep their interest, then I think people push to have them diagnosed as having a learning disability.

Francesca's description of her students is consistent with research in two ways. First, research shows that more students of color than white students are put into special education classes versus general education classes (Blanchett, 2009). Second, research also shows that more male students, as compared to female students, populate special education courses, where the United States Department of Education (2006) has identified 75% of the special education population consisting of boys. The next section will discuss Francesca's views about teaching, beginning with her perceptions about what it means to be a teacher, followed by her understanding of the work of teaching as it applies to her position at WCHS, both in terms of curriculum and instruction.

Perceptions about the work of teaching. Similar to the results presented in Chapter 4 identifying teachers' reasons for entering the profession (see pp. 109-116), Francesca said she wanted to be a teacher for two reasons: her love of reading and her desire to share that love with others. During the interview, she became very animated and emphatic when discussing her reasons for becoming a high school English teacher:

I love English [laughs and raises both hands]. I love reading. I absolutely love reading. When people ask me what I do for fun, outside of sports, I tell them I read. And that's literally what I do. I used to write – I dabbled in writing – but I'm not the best writer. I feel like there might be a novel up in here [points to her head], but we'll see. I don't know. So, I just love reading, and I wanted to pass that joy on to [my students], because I'm not sure that kids today necessarily love reading ... but a bunch of mine now do ... I mean, I have a huge library in my classroom, and kids come and check out books all the time. They get excited. They're, like, surprised. 'What do you mean? A teacher with books?' And I'm like, 'Yeah!' [laughs] ... So getting that instilled in my students is really what I want to do. I really want to teach them how to read ... I love to read ... and help them see the movie in their head, because a lot of kids don't initially.

In this response, I was witness to the complexities inherent in the emotional transactions surrounding teaching. Francesca's love of reading and her desire to engage her students

in reading demonstrate strong intrinsic motivations for teaching, both in terms of having a *personal sense of interest* (see p. 111) in the subject matter and a *personal sense of agency* (see p. 111) in using her influence to positively affect her students, confirming findings presented in Chapter 4. Given that emotion is a product of both experience of involvement and social interaction (Barbalet, 2002; Vygotsky, 1987), as she illustrated here, both her personal interest in the subject matter and her interest in being an agent of change by guiding her students show the complex nature of the interactions that inform Francesca's teacher identity.

Moreover, Francesca's perceptions about the work of teaching high school English were consistent with those that emerged from the survey and focus groups, with an emphasis on the intrinsic satisfactions inherent in the work, revealing both a *personal sense of interest* and a *personal sense of agency* (see pp. 112-113). When asked to provide words to describe her perceptions about teaching high school English, Francesca quickly said, "entertaining, well-read, well-versed in different modalities ... do you want single words?" When I told her she could provide words, phrases, sentences – any information she liked, she continued at length:

Okay ... sometimes zany, good listener ... a manager. [English teachers] need to be able to manage their classroom and their students, but also allow the students to grow ... so, management. I'm not necessarily sure if it would be different in other areas, so ... well, maybe it would. Well-versed in literature. Well-versed in different aspects of writing. Being conscientious of how to make a kid career ready or job ready – not necessarily always college ready. Good story tellers. I think an English teacher should be a good storyteller. And then also able to demonstrate reading fluency, possibly with voices. Acting. Yeah, I think that sometimes you have to be a stage presence ... or maybe that's just me. I like to be a stage presence. Make sure my fluency is fun to follow [laughs].

Her response demonstrated the perceptions that reveal high school English teachers as possessing not only a personal love for the subject matter – she specifically mentioned

literature, reading, and writing – but also a sense of the teacher as an agent who facilitates student learning, student engagement, and, ultimately, student success beyond the walls of school. Francesca also elaborated about the role of teachers as facilitators,

I think that we're dealing with human beings, and you can never make a human being a business. I think we have to look at appropriate child development. Some kids aren't ready to analyze so deeply, but they're still finding their passion and then exploring it – I think that's more crucial, and I feel that's the kind of education I was allowed as a child and I'm trying to provide to my students. The No Child Left Behind Law changed that, and it seems that it gets in the way of letting students explore and inquire about things they're interested in.

At the same time, in light of her frustrations, she emphatically stated,

[Teaching] is the most rewarding career in the whole wide world. I feel like I'm a better human being for doing what I do. I love kids. I love making a difference, and I feel like these kids are going to make a difference. There are a lot of good kids ... and I push them. I'm hoping that, you know, 25 years down the road, they'll remember it.

Undoubtedly, Francesca's comments show that teaching is a helping profession and a caring profession (Noddings, 1984), and that teachers do not enter the profession for selfish reasons, but to engage and influence young people for the betterment of society. The next section will consider how Francesca perceives and understands her work as it concerns curriculum and instruction.

Perceptions about curriculum. Survey data indicated that the majority (79%) of female high school English teachers felt they had some to no choice in determining their curriculum (see p. 117) – essentially, what they teach – Francesca's perceptions regarding this were mixed. She said that her school provided a curriculum for all of her courses (she teaches English in grades 9, 10, and 11), including required texts that were chosen and then mandated without teacher input, and expected her to use the required texts and follow the curriculum with fidelity.

At the same time, she also engages in quiet resistance, teaching the required curriculum when she deems it appropriate for her students, but closing the door to her classroom and teaching with materials she selects in instances when she feels the prescribed materials are uninteresting to her students or to herself. She made very clear that the needs of her students come before the requirements dictated by school administration:

I'm a firm believer that you have to teach what [the students'] reality is. Like I said, I teach a lot of boys, so I like to find books that speak to boys. When I can grab boys' attention in terms of novel reading, like with *The Absolute Diary of a Part Time Indian* – once they trusted me on it, then they're willing to follow me wherever I take them, even as a bridge into the required novels. If I had to start them off on one of [the required novels], I'd lose them right from the beginning.

Furthermore, Francesca also expressed concern about the types of novels her curriculum mandate she teach to her racially diverse, mostly male, students:

I'll tell you what, the books – even the ones I'm supposed to use for literature circles – are all white. And guess what? I don't teach all white kids. So I was kind of, like, we need to really, *really* [loud sigh] write a curriculum centered on essential questions so teachers can apply those to just about any book. I would be much more fond of [the curriculum] if we did that. Because we don't, I guess I'm a firm believer that in order for me to do my job that I just shut the door. And I'm gonna reach the same goals. And we're gonna read deeply. And the kids are gonna be smarter for it. Especially with reluctant readers. Sometimes we just ignore the prescription.

It can be argued that such rigid expectations for teaching serve the interest of the few (Giroux, 2001) – in this case, the interest of the school district in mandating blanket prescription for the sake of ensuring consistency of the delivery of the curriculum while maintaining close adherence to state learning benchmarks. At the same time, there is irony in this type of educational philosophy that embraces structural sameness at the expense of providing multiple pathways of opportunity to facilitate inquiry and a lifelong love of learning, especially for students who are reluctant to engage in the

process. To advocate for her students, during the last school year Francesca met with the secondary English curriculum leader for her school district to argue for including more multicultural literature in the curriculum, providing her with specific examples of texts she thought both supported the implementation of the state teaching standards for high school English and included representation of diverse experiences. Although she acknowledged that the curriculum leader listened to her proposal, she also said,

I'm the kind of teacher, though, that if she didn't listen –and I know this is the heroic journey – I will go out and buy the novel myself. Enough for the entire class, which is what I did with this one novel we're reading in summer school. So, it's cool. Kids are lovin' it already [laughs].

Unlike concerns expressed by other teachers in the study about administrative micromanagement of curriculum delivery in the form of frequent and unannounced classroom visits, particularly the expectation by some that teachers teaching the same course be on script at any given time in spite of how the unique composition of learners in the classroom may affect the learning process, Francesca had no concerns about her administrators engaging in such visits. Although she never said this directly, the many references she provided about closing her classroom door and teaching according to what she felt was best for her students, as well as the relative safety of experiencing a revolving door of inexperienced evaluating administrators (see p. 128 – 129), support this position. Along similar lines, the next section will explore Francesca's perceptions about educational instruction, specifically her use of teaching methodologies to engage students in the learning process.

Perceptions about instruction. Unlike the survey responses in regard to teachers' perceptions about their autonomy in matters of curriculum, where 79% indicated some to no choice in determining what they teach, responses concerning their perceptions

about their level of autonomy in respect to their classroom instruction – how they teach – were much different. Here, 69% of female teachers said they had near or complete choice in how they instructed their students, while only 7% said they had little choice. No female teachers who participated in the survey indicated they felt they had no choice in how they taught (see p. 119). The interview with Francesca also provided a window into understanding this experience as it applied to the teachers at WCHS.

While her discussions about the institutional limitations on curriculum at her school were expansive, consisting of multiple pages interspersed throughout the interview transcript, her comments about methodology were somewhat limited. Francesca’s understanding about how she teaches her students was consistent with the way she takes up curriculum implementation – she follows prescribed assignments and scripts if she finds them appropriate for her students, but does not hesitate to alter her school district’s mandated assignments or implore her colleagues to do the same. Instead, she looks to the same standards her district used to write the curriculum and instruction modules for teachers to formulate her own essential questions and then teach accordingly. She said, “I just kind of went with the essential question and then convinced my co-teacher to follow me on a journey of awesomeness.” When asked to explain what she meant by “a journey of awesomeness,” she explained:

It was that ‘Who Am I?’ essay that everyone is supposed to do. I thought instead of the kids writing yet another essay – at that point in time I think we had written, like, four essays, literally we do four. There are four writing units and four reading units ... and rather than just do another essay, because [the students] had just gotten done writing an essay, I said, ‘Let’s have them create a book. All about themselves. And we’ll teach them some poetry patterns, and then we’ll have a poetry chair and they can present some of their pieces.’ At the end of it, they can do something like the ‘This I Believe’ essay, but, you know, maybe not three pages of ‘This I Believe.’ Let’s make it a little more interesting. So even though I still taught the required curriculum, I changed the instruction

component and went about it in a different way that my students really got into. I don't think they would have been very much into writing yet another essay, you know?

In essence, she stayed true to what she thought would be most beneficial for her students, demonstrating action consistent with both Noddings' (1984) ethic of care as well as Giroux's (2001) theory of resistance. Francesca adjusted her instruction, following what she learned in her education courses about differentiating instruction to fit the needs of her students (Tomlinson, 2014).

Probing further, I asked Francesca to elaborate about methodological prescription, as she understood it at her school. She said teachers are given *suggested* ways to teach, and that the work of teaching was embedded in a prescribed sequence of units and assignments within units, though they did not include specific lessons that are scripted word by word, as is the case with schools that are heavily prescriptive. Moreover, she indicated that she felt she was able to teach the material as she saw fit as long as she could support her decisions with the state teaching standards. Given Francesca's responses in this area concerning her perceptions of students' needs and her collegial interactions, the next section will discuss how Francesca perceives and understands the many relationships in which she engages in the daily work of teaching.

Perceptions about relationships. While the information presented in the sections above explored Francesca's perceptions and understandings about the work of teaching, they also served to inform her emotional geographies, which are active representations of her experience (Hargreaves, 2001). When discussing her experience as it relates to the work of teaching, Francesca often did so in the context of the relationships in which she engages, as did the teachers who represent the middle- and affluent- class high schools

whose case studies appear later in this chapter. Hargreaves (2001) argued that these relationships “create, configure and color the feelings and emotions [teachers] experience about [them]selves, [their] world and each other” (p. 1061). As such, they also comprise the patterns of closeness and distance that inform teachers’ emotional geographies.

As discussed previously (see pp. 50-52), this work is particularly focused on understanding how their professional and sociocultural geographies inform teachers’ understanding of both the work of teaching high school English as well their identities. While professional geographies are understood in terms of teachers’ professional relationships with *students*, *parents*, *colleagues*, and *administrators*, this work acknowledges that each of these relationships may also be shaped by differences of social class or ethnocultural diversity, the factors that inform teachers’ sociocultural geographies. As I analyzed each of the professional relationships that appear in the three case studies, beginning with Francesca below, I also looked for evidence of sociocultural difference in the ways teachers discussed these relationships and address these as appropriate. The following four subsections (*Students*, *Parents*, *Colleagues*, and *Administrators*) will explore the nature of these relationships for Francesca and also seek to understand the extent to which they do or do not inform her sociocultural and professional geographies.

Students. Similar to the findings presented in Chapter 4 regarding teachers’ perceptions of their relationships with students (see pp. 138 – 143), Francesca perceived her relationship with students positively. She assessed the relationship as one in which the students view her as “cool” and “approachable,” but also added that “they also learn

very quickly that I'm fair, but I'm firm and I have really high expectations ... and I won't accept [poor work]." When I asked her if students want to meet her expectations, she said,

Yeah, I think so. Most of them. I think 98% of them. I had a couple of students this year in my co-taught class [where] I tried a lot of different things, like talking to them, dialoguing one on one with them ... and I got nothing. I never got anything out of them. I was constantly calling home. It was so hard ... I didn't understand. I couldn't get them motivated at all.

The situation with two students frustrated Francesca, who considers herself a reflective practitioner who always tries to improve her teaching practice. She continued with explaining her understanding of the ideal relationship she, as a teacher, should have with her students, comparing that to her interaction with a particular unmotivated student, and how that perspective informs her work:

I want my kids to tell me: *How did this work? Did it work well? Did it not work well?* and it just wasn't happening with this one student. I wonder if I have to change it up next year. *Did he feel I respected him?* You know, when I asked him that as part of a class evaluation I do every year, he put a 1, which means he felt I was not respectful to him. It was, like, *whoa!* You didn't think I was respectful? Then he said, *'No, I thought you were respectful. I just thought the other teacher – my co-teacher – wasn't'*. And I asked him what we could do, as teachers, to fix that. He was being very vague. Nothing was very specific, so I still don't know.

The idea that the co-teacher and I kind of came up with was that at the beginning of the year we would engage the students in coming up with the rules and norms for the classroom, kind of like a contract with them, and what that should look and sound like. Then we thought we would have [the students] sign off on it, so they feel like they're part of the process at the beginning of the year. I don't know. I was flummoxed. That kid flummoxed me. I just had no idea how to reach him. I tried everything, too. As much as I could possibly do.

Notwithstanding this particular incident, Francesca's perception of herself as a "cool" and "approachable" teacher was evident in the way she talked about her students and her relationship with them. She said her students have told her she was "the best teacher

they ever had,” while she said others “know I’m intelligent and easy to talk to. They know if they need extra help, then they can always ask.” More specifically, she emphasized her ability to engage with her students on a number of levels that go beyond the work that is done in the classroom:

I try to engage, and they know that I listen to them. I think that’s a big thing. I *hear* [she emphasized this word] what they have to say. So, if they have problems, because a lot of my students do have problems ... [the problems] could be with school or outside of school. It could be relationship issues. They need a trustworthy adult to talk things over with. I’m usually that person that they come and find, because my kids don’t necessarily feel that way about their counselors. They only see their counselors when they’re signing up for classes or when they’re failing classes. A lot of my kids don’t have social work, either, so I’m usually one of those trusted adults. I’m not the only trusted adult in the building, but I’m one of them that they will seek out – it’s like a safe haven for some of them, [especially the ones with] rough home lives. Because I’m very free [with them], even about my own past. My father was an abusive alcoholic, and I let the kids know that. Sometimes, I let them know that you just have to buckle down and figure it out. So, they probably know when they hear that, they know that, *‘Oh, I can probably talk to her about my dad.’*

It was in this conversation that the integration of how Francesca’s professional geography transacted with her sociocultural geography, where her relationships with students was also informed by the unique sociocultural aspects of her students’ experiences, demonstrating a complexity of the work of teaching. The interaction among the professional and sociocultural geographies was further exemplified as Francesca provided an anecdote illustrating her ability not only to establish a sense of trust with her students, but also how the intersection of personal experience and professional relationship combine to help positively guide her students in the difficulties they experience outside of the classroom. At the time of the interview, she was teaching summer school, and shared the experience of one of her students who was taking summer school because he had missed an entire school year. As Francesca told it:

A kid missed an entire year, so I asked, *'If it's not too troubling for you, what went on, because I really don't know you yet, and I've got 14 days to figure it out. What happened that you missed a year of school?'* You know what? He let me know that he was addicted to pills. He was a pill popper, and he was in rehab for a few months, came out, and was really sticking with the program. I think he and my father actually went to the same AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] place. I think they know each other [laughs]. So, we were talking about that, and he said he got caught buying pills again on the property [of the AA program], so they removed him from the program. And I'm like, *'I'm so sorry ... let's pick up this credit right now, you know?'* He's [in school with me] every day. I'm not sure if he's there every day *sober* [she emphasized this word], but he's there every day and he participates, so I guess I'm easy to talk to.

As Francesca shared this story about her student and how she was able to relate with him due to her own father's experience with substance abuse – giving her common ground with her student – I also thought about what her reaction might or might not have been if her personal experience had been different. Having come from a working class background herself, and having had some of the same experiences as her working class students, Francesca was uniquely situated not only to understand the plight of this student, but to use that common ground as the basis for establishing a relationship of trust that then allowed her *to help* and motivate the student for a greater level of success than he would have seen without the benefit of this relationship. Further, this anecdote also confirmed findings in Chapter 4 that one of the primary reasons teachers enter the profession is *to help* others.

Parents. Of all the relationships in which teachers engage in the course of their work, those with parents represent the most distant in respect to proximity (see pp. 143 – 151). In addition, as the findings in Chapter 4 indicated, teachers identified three types of parents (supportive, hyperinvolved, and uninvolved) with whom they interact, each representing a very different type of relationship. In her interview, Francesca's discussions about her relationships with parents consisted of those with either

uninvolved or supportive or parents. If she had any interactions with hyperinvolved parents, they did not emerge in the course of our conversation.

An example of the sociocultural differences teachers experience when their students and/or students' families belong to different cultures than their teachers was demonstrated by the frustration Francesca revealed when addressing her interaction with the parent of the unmotivated student she discussed on p. 174, where she felt that the parent did not share her concern or values about education. She called the mother of the unmotivated student in an attempt to partner with her to determine what she might do to engage the young man. Surprised, Francesca said, "she was actually kind of sounding like she was supporting him dropping out [of school]. It was really irksome for me, because I just wanted to know how to engage him." This brief interaction is an example of the differences that can exist between the teacher's culture and the culture of their students or their students' families that illustrate Hargreaves' (2001) sociocultural geography. Though this example was not typical of Francesca's interactions with parents – in fact, she said she felt she had a lot in common with parents, from being about the same age to having a similar working class upbringing -- it nevertheless demonstrated the gap that can exist between teachers' expectations and values and those of their students' parents.

As demonstrated in the interview, the relationships Francesca forged with her students' parents were intentional and proactive. Her goal was to ensure her students were situated for success in the classroom, and part of that was to enlist their parents as partners in this process. She "goes out of [her] way to contact parents, especially when [she's] worried about [her students'] grades." When she has those conversations, though,

she is mindful of the difficulty of many of them. As a result, she said she makes a point to “go out of [her] way to make those positive phone calls, just to let [parents] know their kids are awesome” at the beginning of the school year, so if a difficult call needs to be made, she has already established a positive rapport with the parent. But the end result with parents is not the only reason she makes regular parent contacts, as she explained:

Yeah, I think it’s huge. It’s huge for my own heart, because I can’t imagine ... I get dejected, you know? We all do. Like, if you made five negative phone calls about how Johnny is doing, then you hear the awful stuff that Johnny has to deal with at home, you’re like, ‘Oh, man! Sorry!’ Even if it’s just one negative call, you’ve gotta make those positive phone calls, too. I like making the positive ones.

Here, she illustrated that because she cares about her students, she must engage with parents, whether that engagement be positive (preferred) or negative. These interactions, as she indicated above, can also be heartbreaking, especially when the call reveals the parent is either not providing what Francesca perceives to be a good environment or the parent seemingly does not care about the student’s progress in school, as was shown in the previous example regarding the parent who supported her son dropping out of school.

While her attempts have included calling or emailing parents regularly, she has also resorted to making home visits when she was unable to contact parents. At a previous school, however, she was “strongly advised not to make home visits unless [she] took someone with [her] for safety reasons.” She said, “If [the parent] is unreachable, I need to be able to talk to [them]. We’ve got to talk about [their] kid.” Francesca understands the work of teaching to go beyond the classroom. Her professional identity is not tied to a room or a subject matter, but to an ethic of care

(Noddings, 1984) that often takes her beyond the walls of the school in an attempt to help her students by any means necessary, an example of how a teacher's personal sense of agency informs her professional identity.

Colleagues. As demonstrated in the findings presented in Chapter 4, teachers' relationships with their colleagues are informed in large part by the school's culture (see pp. 151-152). Francesca's discussion in this area confirmed these findings as she shared her perceptions about her colleagues and her role as a colleague to other teachers in her school.

She presented herself as a colleague who is "engaged" and "knowledgeable," one whose opinions are valued by other teachers in her school. Although she was relatively new to WCHS, Francesca's extensive teaching experience resulted in becoming a mentor for inexperienced or struggling teachers, where, for example, she "helped teach [my] colleagues how to better manage a class." Interestingly, she did not represent herself as a leader. Instead, Francesca referred to helping her colleagues as "sharing" her knowledge with them. She said teachers come to her for ideas for lessons and effective teaching strategies, evidence of a school culture that values collaboration. "Having a dialogue with other teachers about ideas ... I think it's huge," she said. Any differences Francesca identified with colleagues were not based on socioeconomic class or ethnocultural diversity, but on levels of experience. Her willingness to help colleagues emanates from a personal perspective that values sharing for the collective benefit of the group, and is also facilitated by a school culture that values collegial collaboration.

Administrators. Although my interview with Francesca did not confirm the focus group finding that teachers from the working class school tended to be frustrated with frequent administrative turnover and a resulting lack of direction in the building's culture, it is possible this was the case because she had worked at WCHS for only one school year. That said, Francesca was very cognizant about the process by which her administrators evaluated her and what she needed to do to demonstrate she is a highly effective teacher, yet was very confident in regard to how she felt her administrators perceived her teaching and her students' success. She said:

[My administrators] like my classroom. I guess they dig the vibe. The principal and the vice principal will just come in and just chill in my classroom ... literally. Just, like, sit in the corner. And because they're there, I make them participate [laughs]. So they always tell me my classroom is relaxing. I'm, like, 'Okay. That's good.' The kids know what to do. I'll have the kids teach them and I'll actually walk away and do something else. Let [the kids] teach them. Let them show off what they know. [My administrators] always thought that was cool. I think they know that I know my stuff, and they know that I'm willing to do whatever it takes to reach kids. And then they know that it kills me when I can't reach a kid. They also want me to branch out and teach classroom management techniques to other people, which tells me they believe in me and what I bring to the table.

The above excerpt shows Francesca's perception that her administrators value her work as a teacher, acknowledging her work with both students and colleagues. They validate her professional identity with their support of her teaching practice and encouragement to share her work with colleagues as a mentor. Here, there were no indicators that informed Francesca's sociocultural geography.

To summarize, Francesca's interview provided insight into how her many experiences inform both her emotional geographies and professional identity. Her perceptions about the work of teaching, particularly her personal sense of agency and personal sense of interest, inform her identity as a teacher. Furthermore, her

sociocultural geography was similar to that of her students, which resulted in empathy and understanding that fuels her passion about teaching. Most importantly, her interview revealed that the many relationships – both of closeness and distance – in which she engages in the work of teaching with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators, inform her professional geography, demonstrating both the complexity and importance of these unique interactions in defining her identity.

The next case study focuses on the Middle Class High School teacher, Jane. It presents the data that emerged from the interview session using the same structure I used to discuss Francesca's experience, beginning with a demographic description of her school, Middle Class High School (MCHS). This is followed by a section describing her background and experience as it pertains to teaching; a section discussing her perceptions of teaching, which includes sub-sections addressing both curriculum and teaching methodology; and a section discussing the relationships that inform her work, which includes sub-sections addressing relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators. As was the case in the case study of Francesca, the next section about Jane is informed by the survey and focus group findings presented in Chapter 4.

Middle Class School – Jane

School demographic information. Middle Class High School (MCHS) is also categorized as a large suburban high school (Aud et al., 2012). The school is located in a community that has an average family income of about \$67,000 per year (United States Census, 2010). About one-fourth of the students at the school, representing 26%, receive free or reduced lunch (Aud et al., 2012). The school's total enrollment is about 1800 students.

Teacher background and experience. Like Francesca, Jane is a mid-career teacher who, at the time of the interview, had completed her 14th year of teaching, all of them at Middle Class High School. Because of her long tenure at the school, Jane has experienced demographic changes at her school, which, she said, has become increasingly diversified over the years. When she first began teaching at MCHS, she described it as having students who were “predominantly white, but with some Chaldean, a smattering of African American, and maybe a few students of various Asian descents.” She described the current student body composition, albeit still majority Caucasian, as “fairly diverse,” consisting of “a very large Chaldean contingent, a significant African American contingent, and a number of various other nationalities of origin ... [with] quite a few Armenian, Korean and Chinese students.” Interestingly, Jane’s perspective regarding the composition of students at her school do not quite match with government data, which lists the school as 84% White, 11% Black, 4% Asian, and 1% Hispanic, but it is fair to say that what she identified as a sizeable Chaldean population – Chaldeans are Christians from Iraq – is included as part of the White population (Aud et al., 2012).

Because the school’s demographic information placed it in the Middle Class category, I asked Jane about the socioeconomic diversity of the school, which she identified as being very diverse, “We have a range of kids who qualify for free lunch all the way to ones who live in multi-million dollar homes.” This presents a school reality that, at times, fuels conflicts between student groups:

You do have the haves and the have-nots. You do have cliques that form along those lines, especially when it comes to fashion – whether or not you’re wearing the “in” clothing, the “in” materials, whether or not you have a car – those kinds of things do create some tension, though not in the classroom so much. I would

say it probably is more in the hallways and in interpersonal relationships, rather than necessarily in the classroom itself.

Her background makes her well suited for her work at MCHS, she said. She described her background as unique and fueled by the values instilled in her by her family, who placed a high value on making a difference in the world:

I have an unusual background. I grew up overseas, actually in Ivory Coast, Africa. My parents are missionaries there, so I was primarily home schooled and then I went to an American boarding school in the same country. I was only in the states for kindergarten, fifth grade, and tenth grade. I attended a private Christian school while I was [in the states], so I had no experience with public schools until I actually became a teacher.

A product of a middle class household, she began her studies at a large state university in the midwestern United States that her parents had attended. Jane did not have her sights set on teaching until she “took an education course, fell in love with it, and never looked back.” Prior to that, she studied English literature as a result of her love for all things literature and language related, which corresponds with the data that emerged from the survey and focus group participants in Chapter 4 that showed a majority of the high school English who participated in this study did so because of a personal interest in literature and language. It was upon the suggestion of a friend that she thought about teaching as a profession more seriously. As Jane explained:

It was in my second year of college, and I had a crisis because I didn’t know what I wanted to do with myself. I had this literature degree I was working on, but what do you do with a literature degree? I thought that I might go into psychology, but I figured out that I was more interested in figuring myself out than other people [laughed], so [teaching] was probably the best avenue. I knew I wanted to do something that had an impact on society, that was contributing to society, that in some way mattered. I didn’t want some desk job where I was interchangeable with anybody – and that really came from my background. Almost my entire family on my mother’s side are missionaries, so they are very service-oriented.

In Jane's experience, the encouragement she received from her family – including the extended family of aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins – to serve others was reinforced when she started taking education courses. She said, "I realized that this was something where you were making a difference, where I could take my love of literature and apply it to a situation where I was actually contributing to people's lives, contributing to society," confirming the findings presented in Chapter 4 from the survey and focus groups that pointed to teachers' *personal sense of agency* as a reason for entering the profession.

After earning her teaching certificate to teach secondary grades 7-12, with endorsements in English, Speech, and Theater, she began submitting applications to schools in a county near a large midwestern industrial city via the county job consortium for teachers. When she received a phone call for an interview at MCHS, she admitted she had to look up the school, because she had never heard of it before. She sat through a panel interview that consisted of teachers, administrators, parents, and students from MCHS, where she became a finalist and then was offered a full time teaching position, which she has held since the fall of 2001. The next section will discuss Jane's perceptions about the work of teaching as informed by her experience as a mid-career, full time teacher at MCHS.

Perceptions about the work of teaching. Like the findings in Chapter 4 identifying teachers' reasons for entering the profession (see pp. 109-116), as well as similar findings that emerged in the interview with Francesca presented previously, Jane indicated that her reasons for becoming a teacher were her passion for literature and her drive to make a difference in society, which were briefly discussed in the section above.

In addition, she expanded on these comments when I asked her to elaborate about why she became a teacher:

Because I love it. I absolutely love it. It's my passion. I honestly couldn't imagine ... I can't imagine doing anything else. There are two ways in which I have a passion. One is for my content – I love literature. I love it. I devour it. It's my addiction, okay? So, I guess I'm a pusher. I want to pass that love along to other people as best as I can get them to see at least a glimpse of what I see when I look at literature ... But the other part is a passion for interacting with the students. I like having the interaction with the students over the course of the year, getting to know them as individuals, having that connection. Making a difference in their lives.

Here, she demonstrated *intrinsic motivations* for teaching, as shown by both a *personal sense of interest* in the subject matter and a *personal sense of agency* to connect with her students and make a difference in their lives. According to Jane's understanding, the work of teaching high school English is predicated on *passion*, *enthusiasm*, *energy*, and an ability to *connect* to students' lives so they are able to see the impact of learning on a larger scale that transcends the four walls of the classroom. She had a lot to say in this regard:

English teachers have *passion* for what they do – and when they don't have a passion for something, they fake it [laughs]. Because if [teachers] don't have *enthusiasm* for something, the kids aren't going to have enthusiasm for it. You have to have twice as much *energy* as you need them to have for something. I also think that a good teacher also focuses on what students actually need to get out of what they're being taught, but it goes beyond the idea that [students] should read this book because it's a classic book and everybody should have to read it. You need to be able to mine the material and find ways to make it meaningful for students. You need to have a *connection* to their lives. You need to have a connection to the world around them. In some way, you also need to contribute to them being people and global citizens.

In this excerpt, Jane illustrated that the work of teaching is complex and comprised of both personal elements and professional concerns. For her, good teachers bring passion and energy to a classroom of students, are able to understand what students need to be

taught and how teachers can best conduct the work of teaching. At the same time, she also understands that teaching and learning in a classroom are only the initial steps in a larger process of creating meaning that informs students' development as entities that are able to contribute positively to society.

Given Jane's understanding about the role of the high school English teacher, she spoke further about the work of teaching in the context of her students, to whom she felt a sense of professional responsibility. From Jane's perspective, the teacher is a knowledgeable entity that establishes strong working relationships with students in order to be able to reach students at their individual level of learning. She said,

I make decisions based on what I think is best for my students. That is something a good teacher has to do, because the teacher is the one who is at the front lines, knows what the students need, knows who the students are, what their strengths are, what their weaknesses are.

Part of this process, in which Jane views teachers as knowledgeable entities who act as guides to facilitate their students' learning (Freire, 2007), is the challenge of having to reach different students in different ways; not only from hour to hour, but from year to year. Although teaching is a challenge, Jane feels a sense of fulfillment when, on occasion, she is rewarded for her work, exemplifying the findings in Chapter 4 that showed intrinsic motivations as a factor in why teachers take up the work of teaching (see pp. 111 – 112). The reward does not lie in the external motivations for teaching – the benefits, the vacations, the salary. Instead, Jane said the reward of teaching lies in the personal satisfaction of facilitating the growth of her students:

The reward is when I see students develop and grow, when they develop stronger ideas, when I see them begin to develop their minds, challenging themselves. Sometimes, they come back and say, 'Thank you. You made a difference in my life.' Not always, but I get that now and then, and that's the reward, so it makes [teaching] worth it.

At the same time, Jane also expressed frustration and concern with how she perceived teachers – and the work they conduct – are viewed by the larger society. According to Jane, this represents a trend she has seen over the course of her teaching career, but she also indicated that she is “seeing it increasingly more so ... and you don’t have many people who are defending teachers.” She explained:

I think [people] view teachers as replaceable. I think they view them as lazy, that anybody can teach. I think people think we’re in it for the vacation time. There’s just an overall disrespect, but I don’t know why, because teachers used to be respected in this country a long time ago. Not necessarily idolized, but respected.

Further, she also made an explicit connection about how she perceives others view her teaching practice as a factor that influences her morale as she takes up the work of teaching. She said:

The general attitude towards teachers affects my morale. There are times when I feel really dragged down by it. Like, getting out of bed that morning and getting in to school – it’s like, *‘How am I gonna make it? How am I gonna face this? How am I gonna have the energy to do this?’* ... When I get positive feedback – specific, positive feedback – for myself, that’s what allows me to overcome those times.

Here, Jane presented an understanding that the way she feels about her work is not only informed by her personal interest in the subject matter, as demonstrated by her passion for literature, or by a personal sense of agency, where she feels teaching is an engagement in which teachers are agents who positively contribute to the continuing development of the larger society, but is also influenced by the complex interactions surrounding the work of teaching. Her identity as a teacher is informed by a combination of external influences and inner feelings that “constitute both the teacher-self and teacher emotions” (Zembylas, 2001, p. 120). The next section will probe

further into Jane's perceptions about the work of teaching, specifically focusing on her perceptions about what she teaches – her curriculum.

Perceptions about curriculum. At the time of the interview, Jane had just completed her first full year with a new curriculum that was given to her department by the school district. Unlike the previous curriculum development process that was coordinated at the district level and developed by classroom teachers, the new curriculum was developed at the county level and included prescribed units, assessments, assignments, and some (but not all that were necessary) resources. This was a grave concern for Jane, who had volunteered and worked on many curriculum development committees during her 14-year tenure at the school. Perhaps her previous involvement in curriculum development amplified her frustration about having a lack of input in the process, but she was able to speak to the changes in a manner that recognized what she perceived to be the positive and negative aspects of the curriculum implementation:

It was a consultant and a few other people who designed this curriculum, and then it was presented to [the English teachers], and they said, 'You *will* teach this.' There was no input from any teachers in our building or district. It was top down – entirely from them to us – and we had a lot of issues with the curriculum. There were some things that were okay, and there were some things that really were just not. There were a couple of approaches to teaching a particular concept that were useful. They weren't necessarily better than what we'd done before, but they were a different way to approach doing it. There were some other units that were kind of redesigned on the down low by some of our teachers. We [English teachers] took the ideas that were supposed to be taught and then redesigned it to suit our purposes. That was done ... pretty much we did it without asking permission, so [the school and district administrators] don't know any different.

Jane's discussion about the teachers subverting the curriculum the school and district required them to teach is reminiscent of Francesca's quiet resistance, illustrating

teachers' willfulness to exert their expertise in order to make classroom-based decisions that they feel will best help their students learn.

Moreover, while Jane said she had no hand in curriculum development, the school district still expected her to implement the new curriculum in full, even when the curriculum's prescription was at odds with what Jane thought was best for her students. Usurping teachers' autonomy in determining their curriculum, what they teach, has been shown to decrease their motivation and morale to teach (Smylie, 1994), essentially by eliminating their voice, a concern expressed by a majority of teachers in the survey (see p. 117).

Perceptions about instruction. Jane exhibited frustration not only at having to follow a prescribed curriculum, but also that the curriculum that she was expected to follow included scripted pacing, with the expectation of sameness from classroom to classroom. In other words, the curriculum went beyond prescribing *what* is taught to students to also dictate *how* teachers should teach. In Jane's words:

One of the things that is really frustrating with the current curriculum is that they want us to be lock-step. They want us to all be teaching the same thing at the same time. We have fought back against it for a number of reasons, but one of the reasons is that we simply do not have enough novels to provide access to all the classes of the same grade at the same time. It is impossible to do. Because the new required novels are not considered textbooks by the school district, our department doesn't get any extra funding, so we have to buy them [out of English department funds], even though they are written into the curriculum.

In addition to this practical reason for resistance – it's difficult to follow a prescription without the resources to do so – Jane also discussed her frustration with being told how she should teach. A master teacher with years of experience, she found that the new curriculum's pacing and scripted lessons that teachers were expected to follow verbatim

were not suited to her students' needs. She explained a particular teaching unit about argumentation that she was expected to follow:

For example, there was a unit on teaching the argument. Great concept. Fine. But the unit required us to teach it through showing a film, which was *My Sister's Keeper*, and basically involved showing a part of the film, stopping and discussing, showing the next part of the film, stopping and discussing that. It was really ridiculous and juvenile. So we [English teachers] redesigned the whole unit and ended up with something fabulous that involved looking at documentaries, articles, all sorts of different things to look at the different devices that are used in an argument. It ended up being one of the most effective units that we had, but it required us to be mavericks and disregard what we were given.

When I asked her if she was afraid of administrative repercussions of making changes in how she taught, Jane's comment was predicated on a strong relationship with her administrator. While she was expected to follow the scripted lessons, she was confident that her evaluating administrator would support her decision. She explained:

We were very fortunate in our building to have an administrator in charge of the English department who believed in our professionalism, believed what we were going to do was best for the students, and, honestly, he was not able to influence the district to allow us to tweak the curriculum. Meanwhile, we did what we needed to do, knowing that he was not the type to walk in and check whether or not we were on script. The same is not true in the other buildings [in her school district]. One of the other high schools has an administrator who is in charge of the English department who didn't want them to deviate even the tiniest bit, wanting them day by day to be exactly the same. He would pull up their lessons plans, he would want to see their lesson plans. He would pull up their grade books to make sure the same grades were going in on the same day. The expectation is that he expected to be able to walk into three different English classrooms teaching the same grade and see the exact same things going on in each of those classrooms on any given day.

Similarly, she expressed concern that the retirement of her evaluating administrator was causing her stress, as she didn't know what to expect from her new administrator moving forward, and that she felt that her knowledge as a teacher was not valued:

I'm very scared, because my administrator retired this year, so I don't know what's coming our way or if we're going to have something like that [the

administrator at the other high school she mentioned in the excerpt above]. But overall, the whole district's approach to [instruction] is very frustrating. I feel like I'm not trusted as a professional. I'm feeling like what I have to say – the knowledge I bring to the table, my experience – counts for nothing. I've been teaching 10th grade since the beginning, so 14 years, and I have developed my own program, all of these things, and it was tossed out the window. Literally, over a decade's worth of work – gone!

In spite of her frustration, perhaps because of it, Jane revealed her openness with her students regarding the new instructional methods she was supposed to use and her desire to use their feedback to drive her instructional decisions:

I was very up front with them at the beginning, telling them this was new, and that I didn't necessarily agree with all of it, and that I would be tweaking it as I go ... they are all my guinea pigs. At the end of the year, I had them write me a very honest reflection on how the units went – what worked, what didn't, what needs to be changed – because I need to know. They told me that we did metacognitive reflections to death! They were repetitive. That is what the cornerstone of this curriculum is – metacognitive reflections. And they were juvenile, most of them. There were a few that were useful, but most of them were juvenile, especially for my honors kids. It was busy work and was not anything that they could not have just simply stated in a sentence or two to me.

It is this type of concern for students – concern for how instructional methods engage or do not engage students – that is at the core of Jane's reasons for teaching, yet her ability to do so was compromised by top-down administrative dictates she is expected to follow in the course of conducting the work of teaching. In the next section, I will explore how the relationships in which Jane engages in the course of her work teaching high school English – her professional geography -- informs her understanding of her work.

Perceptions about relationships. Given that the interview excerpts presented in the sections above explored Jane's perceptions and understandings about the work of teaching, they also informed her emotional geographies, the active representations of her experience (Hargreaves, 2001). As was demonstrated above, when Jane discussed her perceptions about teaching, whether that included a broad perspective of the profession

or specific discussion of curricular and instructional experiences, she often did so in the context of the relationships in which she engages, specifically the interactions she addressed as they related to students, colleagues, and administrators. As I discussed in Francesca's study, these relationships affect how teachers feel about themselves and their perceived place in the world (Hargreaves, 2001).

As previously discussed, the purpose of this research is to understand how teachers' professional and sociocultural geographies inform their understanding of both the work of teaching high school English as well their identities. While professional geographies are understood in terms of teachers' professional relationships with *students, parents, colleagues, and administrators* (Hargreaves, 2001), this work also acknowledges that each of these relationships may also be shaped by factors that inform teachers' sociocultural geographies. In evaluating each of these professional relationships, I also looked for evidence of sociocultural difference in the ways teachers discussed these relationships and address these as appropriate. The following four subsections (*Students, Parents, Colleagues, and Administrators*) will explore the nature of these relationships for Jane and also seek to understand the extent to which they do or do not inform her sociocultural and professional geographies.

Students. Unlike Francesca's interview, which provided detailed narratives about her students' personal lives, Jane spoke about her students solely in the context of her interaction with them in her classroom. In fact, during the interview -- with the exception of when I asked her about what her students would say about her as a teacher -- she talked about them in the context of how her curriculum and instruction would affect their engagement and learning, situating herself as a knowledgeable entity in

terms of her students' academic needs, but not necessarily one who has an understanding of her students' lives outside the classroom.

When I asked Jane about how her students would describe her, she paused for a moment before she said, "strict, but fair" and "funny, but challenging." What I found interesting in the dualities she presented was that they focused on her professional interaction with students in the scope of daily teaching, but did not speak to her personal traits – with the exception of, perhaps, the word *funny*, which could be interpreted as either professionally or personally. However, she immediately followed with, "I think they would say that they have a good amount of fun in my classroom, but that they also learn a lot," indicating the previously used word *funny* was meant to be associated with Jane's understanding of the work of teaching.

Further, when I followed up with the question *What would be a fun thing students would do in your classroom?* her response was specific to academic, or school-related, activities she does with students in her classroom that she perceives her students perceive as being fun:

Well, sometimes we do activities that are more ... get them up and moving, get them thinking. For example, one of the big difficulties that students have on standardized tests ... on English standardized tests ... is sequencing – questions that have to do with the sequencing of a paragraph, and then tone. So I developed a couple of different activities that have to do with those in a different way than just looking at a paragraph. Like, for sequencing, I wrote three different paragraphs that kind of told a story, then printed them out as individual sentences and cut them into strips. So they worked as partners, and they had to take these strips of sentences and try to figure out the appropriate sequence to tell the story for each of them. I tried to make interesting paragraphs that would relate to [the students], but still have logical clues as to what the sequence was. They really enjoyed that.

While the above excerpt served as Jane's clarification of what she meant by *fun* in her classroom, it also demonstrates how she, as an individual classroom teacher, takes up the

work of teaching. Unlike Francesca, whose responses revealed that the work of teaching defined both her personal and professional identities, Jane's perceptions reveal an individual who is passionate about the work of teaching in the classroom, but does not necessarily reveal a strong sense of involvement with her students on a more personal level, even though she said that one of the reasons she chose to become a teacher was to make a difference in the lives of her students. That is not to say that she is not invested in her students and their learning, because she undoubtedly is, as she revealed when I asked her about how her relationship with students made her feel about her job:

My students make me feel that [teaching] is worth it. That's why I teach – it's for my students. I don't teach for the administrators. I don't teach for the district. I don't even teach for the parents. I teach for the students, and they're the ones who make me feel ... if I can focus on [the students], it makes me want to continue [teaching].

Moreover, Jane demonstrated that as a high school English teacher she is mindful of the needs of her students and adjusts her teaching to be sure all of her students were engaged and able to benefit from the lesson. She highlighted an instance from the school year where she taught three different sections of the same course, English Honors 10, but noticed that the composition of each class was so different – the needs of her students from class to class varied so much – and, as a result, required different instructional approaches to ensure student success. Jane said:

Every class was different, but not by a huge amount. It's not like I had to completely change everything, but one class always needed a little bit more overt instruction on certain things, because I had some students who struggled with understanding prompts and directions and things like that. I had another class that was really great at discussion and digging deeper into topics, so for them I needed to provide some room for that, because these were kids who were going to sit there and twiddle their thumbs if they did not get that. I had to provide them what they needed within the scope of what I was teaching.

In her conversations about students, as I previously mentioned, Jane did not present any information that indicated an interest in the personal lives of her students. Unlike the conversation with Francesca, who represented her engagements with students in terms of both their academic and personal struggles, Jane's focus regarding her relationship with students was purely focused on the act of teaching in the classroom and her ability to follow the requirements of her curriculum (in most cases) while still making learning fun for her students. There are two differences that became apparent between the two, however: the socioeconomic background of each teacher, as well as the socioeconomic background of their students.

Francesca identified herself as coming from a working class family that had middle class aspirations. While the outcome of those aspirations was a position for Francesca as a teacher, a middle class profession, her experience was nevertheless situated in the working class, like her students. Francesca demonstrated an understanding of her students' experiences that emanated from her own, allowing her to build relationships with them that began in the classroom and extended beyond it. In addition, her position teaching primarily special education students, necessitated frequent contact with parents or guardians to conduct the work of teaching specific to special education, such as creating, facilitating and maintaining government required documentation, such as Individualized Education Plans and Medicare billing. Because of the unique conditions of her students' working class parents Francesca conveyed, for example frequent changes in living conditions and ability to maintain consistent phone contact, the work of teaching for her, by default, extended beyond the classroom when she conducted home visits as her only means of communication with the life instabilities

experienced by her students' families. The nature of teaching special education English classes and the responsibilities inherent in that combined with the unique struggles of her working class students resulted in a much different relationship with her students. This relationship began in a professional environment situated inside school, but extended into the working class community, where the professional environment segued in a personal one.

On the other hand, Jane identified herself as being raised in a middle class, albeit unorthodox, home. Her parents were college educated and teachers themselves in their position as missionaries in Africa. But while Jane grew up in an environment surrounded by extreme poverty, her existence was one situated in the middle class values of her parents and the boarding school she attended in Africa for all but three of her formative years. Similarly, although Jane said her students represented a socioeconomically diverse range of students, from those living in manufactured home to "McMansions," all government statistics that describe her school situate it solidly in the middle class. So while one could argue that Jane's experience in this respect is similar to Francesca's – they both teach cohorts of students with whom they share similar socioeconomic backgrounds – what is different is that the requirements of Francesca's work as a teacher are different from those of Jane because of Francesca's role as not only a high school English teacher, but a special education high school English teacher with job responsibilities that require her to maintain individualized contact with both students and their families, providing Francesca with a more holistic view of her students' experiences and struggles. Jane's engagements with students during the course of her high school teaching schedule, which consisted of both general education English

courses and honors English courses, never necessitated contact with her students regarding situations beyond her work of teaching high school English. All of Jane's relationships with students are situated in and around the academics of the classroom, and her focus on this was evident in the ways she spoke about her students, as indicated in the section above. The next section will explore Jane's interactions with parents at Middle Class High School.

Parents. As previously discussed, given the relationships of closeness and distance Hargreaves (2001) identified, the relationships between teachers and the parents of their students are the most distant of those with the four groups (students, parents, teachers, and administrators). At the same time, teachers' relationships with parents are also complex, as seen by the range of hyperinvolved, supportive, and uninvolved parents teachers this research has identified (see pp. 143 – 151). Of the three individual interviews I conducted, the interview with Jane revealed the most tension in her relationships with parents, although she did say that the negative experiences she had with them in the previous year were unusual for her. As I indicated in the above section addressing Jane's understanding about the work of teaching, she also expressed concern that society does not value the work of teaching. Her concerns in this regard also included the perception that she did not feel parents had the same respect for teachers as they once did. In her interview, Jane's discussions about her relationships with parents concerned those who were either hyperinvolved or supportive. Unlike Francesca's experience, where she said many parents at WCHS were uninvolved, Jane situated her frustrations within her oftentimes-reluctant relationship with hyperinvolved parents. If

she had any interactions with uninvolved parents, they were not addressed in the course of our conversation.

Jane's perceptions about her relationships with parents were varied and dependent upon her unique transactions with each parent. When asked about her relationship with the parents of her students, she began by focusing on negative interactions, though indicated that not all of her relationships with parents were negative. She was particularly frustrated by her perception that some of her parents expressed "attitudes like their child must always be right. Their child is not responsible for anything. The teacher is always wrong. There's no respect in the way the parent talks to or writes to the teacher." She went on to describe one particular interaction with a parent during the previous school year that had a deep impact on her experience:

I had a parent this year who wrote some incredibly disrespectful emails to me, and it took every ounce of professionalism in me to respond in an appropriate manner. It was very difficult. I took her email to my administrator. I had forwarded everything to the administrator to say, *'Just wanted to keep you in the loop, because this is starting to boil up.'* So by the time she pulled the administrator in, he was already aware of the emails and [the administrator and I] had already had a sit down conversation about what approach to take with her. Well, when she found out that he had seen her emails, and that we had already had this conversation, she was livid. From her point of view, he should have come into it completely blank and ready to hear her side without my input. She said her email to me was 'private communication' that shouldn't be shared. I think that part of her was ashamed of how she had talked to me in the email.

In Jane's narrative about her experience with this parent, her perception was that this parent did not respect her judgment or professionalism as a teacher. This supports her comments about how others' views of the work of teaching affect her morale (see pp. 186 – 187). At the same time, she also tempered the effects of the incident mentioned above by demonstrating that the interaction was more of the exception than the norm: "I've been fortunate. This year, I've had more trouble with parents than I have in a

while. I had three particular incidents with parents that all went to the administration to some extent, but that's not very common for me. I don't run into that too often." In contrast, it is Jane's perception that the positive feedback she experiences from supportive parents work to mitigate the adverse emotional effects of negative interactions:

When I get positive feedback – specific, positive feedback – for myself, that's what allows me to overcome those times. Even when I get negative feedback, like those parents ... I had a parent who basically told me that I was unreasonable and unfair ... I was able to balance that against all the times that parents have told me that I am fair, I am reasonable, I am easy to talk to -- things like that.

Further, Jane said that her ability to be proactive and positive in her relationships with parents is also based on her conversations with other teachers in her department:

I've heard plenty of stories from other teachers, and there are always parents that we warn each other about – if you're getting this person, be careful, watch out ... and sometimes I think it's the warnings I've gotten from other teachers that have helped me avoid conflict with particular parents, because I've already gotten tips on how to approach dealing with that parent.

What I found interesting about the way Jane talked about her relationships with parents is that they are situated exclusively within her professional geography. Even in the interactions with parents she identified as being negative, the source of conflict was based on her grading of assignments or, in the case of the parent interaction she described, a result of the parent being upset that the teacher indicated in her grade book that her student had plagiarized an essay. Jane said that the parent was not upset about the actual act of plagiarism, to which the parent conceded student guilt, but, instead, about the fact that Jane had inserted a note of explanation next to the student's low grade saying that the student had plagiarized. In this case, the parent was concerned that the comment would be seen by college admissions officials, perhaps hindering her student's

chances at getting into a desirable university, when, in fact, Jane had explained to the parent that no one outside of the teacher, student, and parent would ever see that comment. The reason Jane said she had to add the comment was to demonstrate to her supervisors the context for a low grade that would otherwise be held against her when she was evaluated for student growth. Nevertheless, in her conversations about parents, only professional, school-based concerns were expressed. Jane presented no indication that her view of parents was based on any perceived sociocultural differences. To the contrary, Jane's own socioeconomic class was consistent with that of the parents of her students. As a result, I might not expect this relationship to be informed by sociocultural difference. The next section will discuss Jane's relationship with her colleagues.

Colleagues. While brief, Jane's discussions about her colleagues confirmed both findings in Chapter 4 (pp. 151 – 152) and those from the interview with Francesca that a school's cultural climate, in large part, informs the relationships teachers have with their colleagues. As I illustrated in the section about Jane's perceptions about curriculum (pp. 189 – 191), many of the ways Jane understands the work of teaching is through working with her colleagues to develop curriculum together (this was formerly the case), write lessons together, and support each other in interactions with students and parents (see previous two sections).

When I asked Jane to discuss her relationship with her colleagues, her responses were situated in collaboration, a relational quality that she said extends to – and includes – all of the teachers in the English department at MCHS. Although she did say that the spirit of collaboration was alive and well in the English department, she also said that

she “can’t speak for the entirety of the school,” which is fair. Jane clarified the nature of her relationships with colleagues when she elaborated:

It’s pretty collaborative not only in content, but with students. We have conversations about students who may need to be challenged more, or about students’ learning styles, but we also talk about students’ parents and those kinds of things. And it’s not the negative things all the time. In fact, when we talk it’s mostly positive, just kind of a *‘this student struggles with this, so you might have to go over it a little more,’* or *‘this student needs to be challenged more.’* You know, things like that.

In essence, Jane’s relationships with her colleagues are situated in the scope of her work as a teacher. In defining her interactions with colleagues as collaborative, Jane’s view confirmed initial findings presented on p. 123, where 87% of teachers surveyed said their relationships with their colleagues was either good (38%) or very good (49%). Similar to the survey responses that asked teachers to describe the words they thought their colleagues would use to describe them (see p. 123), Jane situated her relationships in the realm of the professional. She did not speak about her colleagues in personal terms, and did not indicate that she had any interactions with them beyond those at her high school. The next section will discuss Jane’s relationship with her administrators.

Administrators. Of the three work site based, or building based, relationships in which teachers engage (students, colleagues, and administrators), survey findings in Chapter 4 (p. 124) revealed the relationship teachers have with their administrators represents the one of greatest distance. Similarly, focus group findings showed that teachers’ relationship with their building administrators set the tone for the building’s culture, which determined the extent to which teachers felt supported to conduct their work in the areas of instructional strategies, resources, and student discipline.

While the words focus group participants used to describe their administrators was overwhelmingly positive by a ratio of 4:1, Jane's responses about her relationships with administrators included both positive and negative views. What is significant about this, however, is that her negative responses were focused exclusively on district-level administrators who implemented a top-down curriculum that did not include teacher input in its development (see p. 189), as was the case in previous curriculum writing and implementation in her district. In contrast, Jane expressed a liking for, and trust of, her current evaluating administrator, whom she identified as being very supportive of her and the teachers in the English department (see pp. 189 – 191). Interestingly, the relationship with district administrators represented a greater relational distance than the relationship with her building administrator and evaluator. So, while overall study findings indicated teachers' relationships with administrators as representing the most distant of the school-based relationships (this excludes parents), Jane's perceptions offered an additional layer of distance within the administrator category.

When I specifically asked Jane to reflect on her perceptions of her building administration's relationships with teachers in her building, she said that the nature of the relationship varied depending on the administrator and the individual administrator's philosophy of educational management (there were four total administrators in her building, each assigned to evaluate different departments). As she indicated, she had completed the school year with a long-time administrator whom she perceived understood the specific work of teaching high school English, but feared for the future, as that administrator was retiring and she did not know who the replacement would be. Jane said, "so that's why I'm nervous about who we're going to get [for the English

department's next administrative evaluator]." She offered this comment in the context in which she perceived a recent trend in which administrators in her building are "much more data driven now." Jane explained:

If you can't provide numbers and concrete evidence of this improving or that improving, or that you do this or that you do that – if it isn't somehow concrete, if it isn't objective, then [administrators] tend to discount it, which is where there is a real struggle in the English department. Because we are so much more subjective on ... not that there isn't data ... not that there isn't a way to demonstrate [a student's learning progress], but unless you have an administrator who [understands] that, who understands that it might be more of an explanation rather than a pile of numbers in front of you, then they're going to discount what you have to say. So that's why I'm nervous. Are we gonna get someone who is not going to understand that and expect everything to be number oriented? I don't know.

On the other hand, Jane viewed the yearly process of her teaching evaluation with her administrator as a positive and collaborative experience, where she would meet with the administrator, they would discuss her strengths in the classroom, and they would identify a focus area for improvement together. In speaking of that administrator, she said, "[English teachers] have been very fortunate to have had that administrator." But she also indicated that other administrators in her building use the evaluation process "as a form to rip people apart. For them, it is not collaborative."

So, again, it is important to understand that teachers' relationships with their administrators, as is the case with other relationships, represent unique and individual interactions. While Jane's recent relationship with her evaluating administrator was positive and collaborative, she expressed uncertainty moving into the future in which she will be evaluated by an entity unknown to her.

To conclude, Jane's perceptions about the work of teaching, similar to Francesca's, were informed by both a personal sense of interest in her subject matter, as

well as her personal sense of agency to help others through her work. Jane's interview also revealed that her professional identity is constructed through the relationships in which she engages in the course of her work. She demonstrated great personal satisfaction when she saw her students grow in their abilities, but also noted her frustration with the perception that her professional voice in curriculum development was devalued. Like Francesca, Jane's sociocultural geography was not informed by difference, but by class similarity. Similarly, her responses in this interview did not reveal any change in behavior regarding relationships with those who came from different cultural backgrounds, perhaps due to her own experience growing up in Africa. The relationships that informed her professional geography were mixed. Unlike Francesca, she expressed more distance in her relationships with students, concerned with their growth in relation to the study of English and not with their personal lives.

The next case study explores the experience of the Affluent Class High School teacher, Elizabeth. The section will be structured similarly to the two previous case studies. As such, it begins with a demographic description of Affluent Class High School (ACHS). This is followed by a section describing her background and experience as it pertains to teaching; a section discussing her perceptions of teaching, which includes sub-sections addressing both curriculum and teaching methodology; and a section discussing the relationships that inform her work, which includes sub-sections addressing relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators. As was the case in the two previous case studies presented in this chapter, the final case study about Elizabeth is informed by the survey and focus group findings presented in Chapter 4.

Affluent Class School -- Elizabeth

School demographic information. Similar to WCHS and MCHS, Affluent Class High School (ACHS) is also categorized as a large suburban high school (Aud et al, 2012). The school is located in an affluent community that has an average family income of \$152,000 per year (United States Census, 2010). Unlike the working and middle class schools, ACHS has a relatively small amount of students who receive free or reduced lunch, about 5 percent (Aud et al., 2012). ACHS has a total enrollment of approximately 1300 students. The next section will discuss Elizabeth's background and experience.

Teacher background and experience. Of the three teachers I selected for case study exploration, Elizabeth's story is the most compelling. Although both Francesca and Jane discussed the work of teaching high school English very passionately, Elizabeth's energy and drive took our discussion about teaching into overdrive. While she typically spoke very quickly and excitedly, often gesturing emphatically – she told me she had a tendency to be a little hyper, especially after having had her morning coffee – she also took our conversation very seriously, jotting down reminders for herself as I asked her questions, so she would be sure not to leave out even the smallest detail.

As she began to tell me about her background and the experiences that led her into the teaching profession, it was evident that Elizabeth is a reflective practitioner who understands the role of her life's context and experience in informing her professional identity. When I asked her to tell me about her educational background and teacher certification, she asked me if she could begin when she was really young, because she

saw her life's journey as key to her teaching philosophy and practice. So this is where the conversation began.

Although Elizabeth's parents were both teachers, situating them firmly in the middle class, her experience was unique because her parents tried to provide her with many of the experiences her wealthy aunts, uncles, and cousins had, but on a shoe-string budget that included weekly family coupon-cutting and other cost-cutting measures, giving her the advantages of an affluent class perspective on a middle class budget. She said the following about the impact of her extended family's wealth on her experience:

In retrospect, I would describe my upbringing as a privileged one. Absolutely. When I was a kid, I would have said no, because I was surrounded by very wealthy relatives. I'm talking, like, stupidly wealthy, right? So my experience was – God, I was so lucky, but I didn't know it at the time – *Why can't we go to France for the summer, dad?* You know, one of my cousins broke my Walkman, and she said, *'Well, just have your dad buy you another one.'* And I'm like, 'No, that's not how this works ... [laughs] gotta save for that.' But I recognize as an adult as being incredibly privileged. I mean, we had a sailboat. I took ballet lessons. I took piano lessons. I went to a private school. Of course, I was super privileged. But we didn't have some of the niceties – like my parents never went out to dinner; they always scrimped and saved. We were middle class, but we did very well.

Elizabeth's upbringing provided her with opportunities that enriched her life with both the economic and cultural capital that define the differences between the classes (Bourdieu, 1993). The family budget was especially tight, as Elizabeth explained, because her mom decided to put her career on hold to be a stay at home mother until Elizabeth entered high school, and her father worked as a public high school English teacher. Elizabeth's parents both emphasized inquiry-based learning and encouraged her to engage in constant questioning, an aspect of education Anyon (1980) identified as being specific to an affluent class education, and no doubt a result of their dalliances with relatives in the affluent class, as seen in the following:

I learned more through experiential learning. We were always going to places like the zoo, but we wouldn't just go to the zoo. Mom would – she's a biology teacher – ask questions like: *Why do you think the animals do this? What do you notice about the animals?* It wasn't just going to the zoo. Everything was inquiry based. We would go to the museum, and we would talk about Degas. *What do you like about Degas?* Like, *everything* [she emphasized this word] was inquiry based.

In addition, Elizabeth was home schooled during the year she would have been in third grade as she and her parents lived on a sailboat for a year, traveling from Annapolis to the Florida Keys and back. Her dad took a sabbatical for the excursion, as it was something he had always wanted to do.

When Elizabeth returned to school after a year of experiential learning on the sailboat with her parents, testing placed her in the 6th grade – two grades higher than where she should have been placed chronologically. When this happened, her parents did not allow her to advance, something for which Elizabeth expressed gratitude, “because I probably would have been beaten up very regularly.” She spoke about her childhood in positive terms and expressed an understanding of the differences between her middle class upbringing and her cousins' affluent class upbringing:

A lot of the privilege of money is not privilege at all. So for many of my cousins who had all of those privileges, their parents didn't go on vacations *with* [her emphasis] them. They never got to live aboard a sailboat. Their parents let them quit ballet and piano, even though I yelled at my parents about practicing. To this day, I'm so grateful that they had me practice an hour every day. I had privilege in terms of parents who were involved and made sure I had a wonderful childhood – my cousin's parents were so busy working that they didn't get that. I'm tremendously lucky.

When it was time to go to university, Elizabeth felt the pressure from her extended family to attend an Ivy League school, but she ended up choosing a small liberal arts college in an upper midwestern state instead. “My parents really wanted me to go to a conservative school, but I couldn't handle it,” she said. The university she attended for

her undergraduate degree specifically focused on experiential education, which was an extension of the educational values her parents imparted to her. Her undergraduate program of study also included study abroad, where she travelled to Kenya and worked with street children. It was this experience in which Elizabeth “fell in love with working with kids and people and found out [she] was naturally good at teaching and really enjoyed watching people learn.” After returning from abroad, she promptly enrolled in education courses at her school. Interestingly, when she told her English teacher father that she wanted to become a teacher, he told her “fine, just as long as you don’t become an English teacher” due to his concerns about her future potential workload. Instead, Elizabeth had other plans:

Well, in math I can’t really have the live discussions that I really want to have, you know? Math is too confined to the subject – not that I don’t know how to branch it out. I like what lit gives me in terms of talking about issues, about what kids are struggling with. It’s all about life. All literature boils down to love and death, and I want to talk about those things. And he [her dad] tried to warn me about the workload, and I just didn’t believe him to the extent that it’s true.

As a result, Elizabeth earned her teaching certifications in both English and math, but has taught only English courses for grades 9 – 12 at Affluent Class High School, her first and only employer, since the fall of 2001, making her a 14-year teaching veteran at the time of our interview. She described the hiring process as being “very loose. I sent in my resume, had one interview, and they called me back and offered me a job,” though she believes her international experience and broad-mindedness regarding teaching and learning made her a good candidate. Elizabeth recently earned a master’s degree in Fine and Performing Arts, but her graduate work, focusing on film and video production, was to fulfill her own interests and did not relate to her work as a high school English teacher.

Elizabeth described ACHS and its students comprehensively. ACHS is a public school of choice that is an International Baccalaureate school. Because it is a school of choice, she said it means “that either the students choose it or the parents choose it, and you can usually tell which [laughs].” She also noted that students are typically highly motivated and attend the school “because they’re genuinely curious or want to learn or want to push themselves. Some are there because they want a safe environment. Others are there because they think the IB diploma will open more doors for them.” In her view, students who attend ACHS are mostly upper class, though there are some students who represent the upper middle classes. In terms of the ethnicity of her students, Elizabeth said the nature of the IB program tends to attract a more diverse student population, including international students who were born overseas, representing about 35% of the population. The remaining students are a fairly equal mixture of white, black, Indian, and Asian students. Graduates of ACHS earn two diplomas, a State of Michigan diploma and an International Baccalaureate diploma. At the time of the interview, 100% of the school’s seniors earned both diplomas. Given the ethnic diversity of the school, Elizabeth said that most of the tensions among students are not centered around ethnicity, as one might expect. Instead, she pointed to tensions surrounding LGBTQ students, a population that has been challenged by a predominantly conservative student body, necessitating sensitivity training and continuing education for both students and their parents.

What I found interesting about each of the three teachers with whom I conducted interviews is that their background and experience lined up fairly consistently with the socioeconomic status of their schools of employment. Francesca, while identifying as

middle class, was raised in a working class environment and now teaches working class students, with whom she identifies. Jane, who identified as middle class, had a middle class upbringing with college-educated parents, and now teaches at a school where her students have had similar upbringings. Moreover, Elizabeth, while raised in a middle class home, had exposure to affluent class experiences through extended family, providing her with the background and experiences that have allowed her to conduct the work of teaching successfully with her affluent students. While the nature of this study did not allow for further investigation of this phenomenon, an area for future research might look at how the background and experience of teachers aligns with the socioeconomic standing of their schools of employment. That said, the next section focuses on how Elizabeth perceives the work of teaching.

Perceptions about the work of teaching. Immediately upon sitting for the interview, Elizabeth began with an anecdote describing an interaction she had just had with a mother and her son at the library that was the location for our meeting, causing her to be about ten minutes late. The library that was the site of our meeting was located in a working class community. I met with Elizabeth two days after she had finished grading the last of her students' final assessments before summer break. While I hadn't asked her any questions at this point, she felt compelled, since the focus for our discussion was teaching, to relay the following narrative, which speaks not only to Elizabeth's passion for her work, but also the outside influences that affect others' perceptions about the work of teaching, revealing her own perceptions:

When I was walking here across the library floor, there was a little boy holding his mom's hand, and I heard him say, '*Mom, when's school gonna start?*' And I said, '*Oh, that's so great! School is fun!*' And his mom kind of looked at me funny, but then she said, '*Yeah, he loves school. He will not shut up about it.*'

And I'm like, *come one, you need to have a more positive attitude about it* [Elizabeth was thinking this, but did not actually say it to the mother]. So then I asked him a couple more questions about it, like what grade are you going into... And then the mom pulled him away. I said, *'I'm sorry, but I'm a teacher.'* And the mom said, *'At least you like kids. There are teachers who are out there who definitely don't like kids.'* And that's the attitude, right? I encounter that again and again. She was positive with me, but she had to point out, like, 'God, there's awful teachers out there.' And, you know, we don't say that there are awful engineers out there, or there are awful dentists, or whatever. We would only say, 'Don't go to that dentist.' Nobody makes that comment about any other profession, I feel. Maybe lawyers. People make jokes about lawyers. But ... AHHHHHH! It's incredible.

Prior to becoming a teacher, Elizabeth felt she had a thorough understanding of the work because her parents were both teachers, but that her first year on the job was a "shocker." She said the most challenging aspect of conducting the work of teaching was the workload. Although she acknowledged that the job of teaching can be done at different levels, she also said that in order to be an excellent teacher, one has to sacrifice, situating her perception about teaching solidly with Noddings (1984), who identified teaching as a female-based caring profession that, like motherhood, often results in its practitioners giving of themselves for the benefit of others. It is an internal struggle for Elizabeth to maintain a healthy balance between her personal life and her work life, a struggle that has cost her at least one serious relationship. She discussed the impact of her choices and how she understands the work of teaching high school English in this context in the following excerpts:

It's exhausting during the school year. If I want to be really good, I have to give up at least one full day of every weekend. I don't know how people with families do it. I don't know how they do it. I could not be as good of a teacher as I am and have a family. I could not do it. I am exhausted [emphasizes this word] at the end of the day from giving, giving, giving, giving ... all day long. And I love it! But I'm exhausted at the end of the day and I still can't keep up with the grading. I've started to put grading down, but I notice some of the new teachers [in the building] going through the same struggle. I tell them, *'I know it kills you to do it, but you've got to let some things go.'* And the problem is, if

you literally want to be the best teacher you can be, that's the other part – the struggle. The internal struggle or conflict, *'I know I can do better, but I can't do better without more personal cost.'* And I need that balance. I destroyed a personal relationship teaching. We were going to get married. We were engaged and I drove him away with my work.

My first two years, Saturdays were forensics tournaments. Sundays were for grading. That's when I killed my relationship, right? So I went in at the end of my first year – maybe it was the end of my second year – and just broke down in my principal's office and just started crying. It was at the end of those three months and I was a mess. He asked me what was wrong. I told him, *'I need you not to hire me next year.'* He's, like, *'What?'* It's killing me. I'm exhausted. But I love it too much to say no if you offer it to me again. I need you to not hire me next year, because I just can't say no. He looked at me and said, *'I am ordering you to take two days off.'* And I was like, *'I can't take two days off. I can't leave my kids for two days.'* You realize that your kids are a little more resilient as you get older and more experienced. But I was like, *'Oh my god!'* So, he forced me to take two days off, which was smart. And then he called me in and said, *'You're a better teacher when you're happier. You need to start taking care of yourself and find that balance.'*

Admittedly, part of Elizabeth's issue with balance stems from her self-described "Type A personality" that drives her to do her work. She views teaching as a job that inherently values responsibility – first, to her students, but also to her community – placing Elizabeth as a teacher who values her work, in part, because she sees the importance in agency, in conducting her work in order to achieve a greater social good, similar to the perspective Jane advocated in the previous case study. At this point in her career, however, she has realized that there is a point where her ethic of caring can be too emotionally taxing for her personally, which has slightly changed her perspective. Now, she said she cares about her students, but acknowledges the need to be able to step back from that for the sake of her own health. She provided the following example:

I used to take on my students' personal problems in my first three years, and it was really taxing. Now, I'm like, 'Yeah, I have suicidal students. I will work with you the best that I can at school. I'll say a prayer for you on Sunday.' But I'm not taking it home with me anymore. Thank god. Whew!

At the same time, Elizabeth loves the work of teaching: “Every day. Every day I have fun in the classroom. I talk about all the stress, but teaching is a lot of fun [laughs]. It’s just a lot of fun in the classroom.” Like Francesca and Jane, she described herself as passionate about her subject matter. But her identity as a teacher is also situated in the following personal qualities she pointed out: *driven, committed, caring,* and *intense*, which, while similar to how Francesca identified, differed from Jane’s career-focused view of the work of teaching.

In response to my question about how she views herself as a teacher, Elizabeth provided a response that focused on a teacher’s ability to define her own style, identifying her own teaching style as one that focuses on the active engagement of her students, whatever the lesson may be. She said she loves the challenge of “finding ways to actively engage students’ minds and, sometimes, even their souls.” To do this, a frequent method is discussion, which I will discuss further in the sub-section, *perceptions about instruction*. The next sub-section will explore Elizabeth’s perceptions about her curriculum – *what* she teaches.

Perceptions about curriculum. Unlike the experiences of Francesca in the working class high school and Jane in the middle class high school, Elizabeth’s curriculum expectations were very different. She explained that her curriculum is based entirely around the International Baccalaureate organization, which guides her decisions about what to teach, but offers her ample choice to choose from a list of literature that supports the themes emphasized in the curriculum. The idea of teachers having guided autonomy in this respect is reminiscent of Anyon’s (1980) findings regarding courses of study in affluent schools, where choice and flexibility are valued. Furthermore,

Elizabeth's curriculum demands that she teach from multiple perspectives in order to understand the material holistically in an atmosphere that "diffuses any sort of judgment that might be based on bias or ignorance." Elizabeth explained:

You have to teach everything that's in your curriculum and in your subject area, but you need to be able to have a little bit of flexibility to draw on teachers' areas of expertise. Mine is African American literature, so I am able to bring more stuff in that connects more to that area of expertise. So, we have guidelines, but there is some autonomy. The guidelines get stricter in the older grades. For 11th and 12th grade, we're given a list of prescribed titles, but the list is 15 pages long, and you have to choose so many international, so many local, so many from different genres, but we have choice. I love it.

Because of the freedom Elizabeth has in determining what she teaches, she did not engage in any of the extended conversations about her curriculum as Francesca and Jane did. One of the reasons for this might be her level of comfort and satisfaction regarding her curriculum. Conversely, Francesca and Jane, who experienced heavily prescribed and paced curricula, found their lack of autonomy in this regard professionally stifling, to the point where both engaged in their own versions of quiet defiance in order to teach their students with materials they felt to be appropriate. The next sub-section will explore Elizabeth's perceptions about instruction – *how* she teaches.

Perceptions about instruction. As indicated in the section about her perceptions about teaching, Elizabeth views the instructional aspect of teaching as being "the most rewarding." She is given full autonomy to teach using the methodologies she views as appropriate to get her students to reach what she called the "big 'aha' moment," the time during instruction when she can see that her students are making strong connections not only to the material, but to the "big picture."

In order to get her students to that moment, Elizabeth's instructional style is heavy on Socratic instruction. She said:

It's a lot of discussion, but I know where I want them to go with it. It takes a lot of thinking on my feet, but I always have an 'aha' moment at the end. There has to be, like, an [snaps finger] okay, we got the whole point of today. I let them kind of guide how to get there, right? I'm nudging them along, and they get to choose which path we take to get there, which is where the exhaustion comes in, because you never really know how they're going to get there. And each group of kids is different that way. But I have a beginning point and a final destination, so I have tactics along the way. But in between that, you have to decide where they're going, what they're thinking, and how you're getting there. So there is just as much give and take in the beginning. I get them started, but I have to be picking up on their cues and following their patterns of thought. They're not following mine – they don't know where we're going yet. And we don't always meet my destination, but we always reach a destination.

If Elizabeth were forced to follow a script or assigned pace, Francesca and Jane had experienced, she would not be able to teach “on [her] feet,” or take her students down different paths to help them make connections and engage in the learning. Instead, she is able to rely on her own expertise to drive the instructional decisions she makes in the classroom. Elizabeth is expected to be a professional and is given the latitude to conduct her work autonomously, and she does just that. As was the case in the last section, where Elizabeth's autonomy to choose materials within her curriculum resulted in personal satisfaction and professional validation, Elizabeth's ability to deliver instruction by relying on her professional knowledge and experience also speaks to the power of autonomy in how she understands the work of teaching. Next, I will present the last major section of this chapter, highlighting Elizabeth's perceptions about the relationships in which she engages in the course of her work as a high school English teacher.

Perceptions about relationships. In arguing that the relationships in which teachers engage inform their emotional geographies through actively representing experience, Hargreaves (2001) identified teachers' relationships with students, parents, colleagues,

and administrators as ones that inform their identities both personally and professionally. As I discussed in the two previous case studies, these relationships affect how teachers feel about themselves and their perceived place in the world (Hargreaves, 2001). Given the intent of this research is to understand how teachers' professional and sociocultural geographies inform their understanding of their work and their identities, this section will consider teachers' professional relationships with *students, parents, colleagues, and administrators* (Hargreaves, 2001) as a means of doing this.

Students. As was demonstrated in the survey, focus groups, and two previous case studies, teachers' relationships with their students are at the core of the work of teaching and central to informing teachers' identities. Similar to the case studies of Francesca and Jane, Elizabeth also said her students would describe her as *passionate* about her subject matter. While she admitted that her persona in the classroom can be “a tiny bit scary at first to the shyer kids, once they get to know me they say, ‘*you’re not scary at all*’”. Given that the relationships teachers have with students are so important to being able to conduct the work of teaching, Elizabeth's discussions about her students and her love of teaching them were not surprising. Although a lot of her class time is spent facilitating discussion, which she strongly values as an instructional tool, she is very cognizant of the power of forming strong, positive relationships with her students that are based on trust and allow her to take her practice to a higher level. She said the following:

I love the relationships I form with my students. We get to know each other in the classroom a lot. Teachers and students get to know each other a lot. We work together in the classroom a lot. And, so, getting to know the students and forming [voice trails off] ... getting to know them as people and having them get to know me as a person, as opposed to some cyborg teacher who closes the door

and lives in the classroom cabinet at night. That's been rewarding. Watching kids grow that way, that's the best thing.

In terms of how she spoke about her relationships with students, Elizabeth's level of interaction falls between Francesca, who was very knowledgeable about her students' lives both inside and outside of school due to her position as a special education teacher, and Jane, who discussed relationships with her students purely as they connected to the experience of the classroom. Elizabeth's perceptions about her relationships with students are situated in the professional classroom and inform her professional geography, but they are also based on establishing a sense of personal trust that enables her to teach her students more effectively. In no way did Elizabeth indicate any sociocultural difference from her students, which may be linked to the fact that her own background provided her with many of the same experiences as her students.

Parents. While teachers' relationships with parents are the most distant of the four types of relationships discussed in this research, of the three case study interviews Elizabeth's perceptions of these relationships fell in between the hyper-frequent communication expressed by Francesca and the somewhat tense relationships described by Jane. In fact, Elizabeth demonstrated a wide range of interactions with parents, the majority of which were positive.

When I first asked Elizabeth about her perception of her relationships with the parents of her students, she began with, "I'm very lucky. Most of my interactions are very positive." She continued by telling me that because her classroom is next to the entry door for her school, parents who enter the school to go to the office must pass by her room, so they naturally stop in and say hello to her if they see she isn't busy. These

reactions are all positive ones, she said. Even her interactions with parents at other times, including parent-teacher conferences, tend to be positive:

I get requested quite a bit, so I think they like me as a teacher. I routinely hear My kid loves your class ... they come home and talk about your class. Thank you for getting my kid to talk about school [laughs]. It's funny, because I purposely tell kids to have a discussion at dinner with their parents about what we talked about in class as a way to deepen their understanding.

In addition, the biggest source of contact with parents for her is when she has concerns about her students. It is these calls -- where she informs parents that their child is failing, has not turned in homework, or is having other issues in her class -- that are the most difficult for her. While one might expect that many of these calls could result in negative outcomes with parents, Elizabeth said, "nine times out of ten, the initial response is thank you for bringing this to my attention." Furthermore, she said that "interacting with parents is something you get better at the more you grow as a teacher," indicating a learning curve in terms of how the teacher initiates and directs the conversation.

When Elizabeth began her career, she was not as adept at dealing with parental concerns. She spoke about one situation when what she called a conservative parent took issue with the world-focused IB curriculum that is the centerpiece of her school, angrily claiming that it was anti-American. She said, "It's not anti-American, it's pro-World. The curriculum is just acknowledging the great, wonderful things, the privileges we have in America while still being aware of the world, too." After she had taught for several years, she was able to hone her approach and engage in more positive interactions. In the next section, I will discuss Elizabeth's perceptions of her relationships with colleagues.

Colleagues. Unlike the collegial interactions depicted by Francesca and Jane, which were based in the professional realm, Elizabeth talked about her colleagues both in terms of her professional relationship at work and her relationship with colleagues outside of work, something that was missing from the relationships depicted in the two previous case studies. Interestingly, Elizabeth understood her collegial relationships to be different from the typical collegial relationships. She was very specific and thorough in depicting these relationships:

God, I'm so lucky. I do not think I'm in the norm or the average experience. We have a staff workroom, so instead of working by yourself in your classroom during your prep period, you are in the staff workroom and are constantly engaging with your colleagues. Some of it is personal and fun, and you create a really positive environment. I think that kind of play is something that is overlooked in schools, and I think play is, like, playing It's part of having fun, it's part of being creative, it's part of maintaining positive energy, it's part of coming up with new and good ideas that work. So we play together. I love that our staff workroom encourages people to play together. I've tried to foster that. I mean, we have people on staff who play practical jokes with each other, and we also get together outside of school – not just at parties, but we'll play together. We play games together. We are constantly doing a battle of wits at lunch together. We often eat lunch together, which is really nice. So just, um, constantly working together. We call ourselves a family. We really have become a family, and we talk about that, and it's cool. So, I'm very lucky to be in this very positive environment. I don't think any of us wouldn't go to bat for the other one if something was going on.

It is evident in Elizabeth's lengthy response to this question that positive relationships are one of the keys to maintaining a strong school culture. When I followed up with a question about how a school can work toward achieving the type of culture she discussed above, she elaborated considerably:

Part of it is in the make-up of who you hire, and part of it is in the culture you create. It is a combination. At my school, [teachers] are in and out of each other's classrooms. In the English department, we're constantly collaborating on curriculum, or just talking about reading a really great book. We really geek out over literature – and you really need that, because you don't always get it from the kids. Like, you really need to continually feed that passion for your subject.

So I like geeking out over literature. I like collaborating. We collaborate on everything. We have a good understanding that we have to be mostly together on things, but we accept that everyone has their own separate style and their own favorite tastes in literature, so it's a nice blend of working together and collaboration. We have really good people.

Elizabeth's responses in the area of collegial relationships demonstrate the power of collaboration and positive school culture in shaping her positive perceptions of these interactions. Even though she acknowledges differences in teachers' styles or literature preferences, she also considers these differences positively, ones that are the foundation for a pleasant, stimulating environment in which to conduct the work of teaching. Here, there is no competition among teachers, but a sense that every teacher plays a unique role and is recognized both individually and collectively as contributing to the school culture. The next section will discuss Elizabeth's perceptions of her relationships with her administrators.

Administrators. As she demonstrated in the section about her perceptions of the work of teaching, Elizabeth views her interactions with her administrators positively, but not without some bumps in those relationships. I asked her to discuss her interactions with administrators over the course of her 14-year career. She explained that she had witnessed three different administrators during that time, offering a description of each unique experience.

During her first four years at ACHS, Elizabeth's described her relationship with her first administrator as "a little bit scary. I had very little interaction, and I really didn't understand what my relationship with her was." Further, she said that there was one negative interaction, but ascribed the negative interaction to the fact that the administrator "had no perception of me. She didn't know me. She wasn't in my

classroom.” Because of this, Elizabeth reflected and evaluated, coming to the conclusion that she needed to take the time to make a concerted effort to invite her administrator into her classroom, especially if she was doing something interesting on a given day. “I stop by and talk to an administrator now, and I try to let them know where my pedagogical philosophy is, where my actions come from.” While she said she still remains cautious, she has learned to be more diplomatic, in the traditional sense, when interacting with her administrators.

Elizabeth’s second administrator was in the building for the next nine years, the majority of her career. During her tenure, Elizabeth said she was mindful about her interactions – based on her first experience – but that those interactions were infinitely more positive than the ones she had had with her first administrator. It was this administrator who identified her as a leader in the school, an identification that took Elizabeth by surprise, but also one that boosted her own sense of esteem and accomplishment in the profession. This particular principal “has twice called [Elizabeth] a master teacher, and has high regard for [her],” labels she accepted, albeit initially reluctantly. She described this principal as a “guide,” who facilitated her development as a teaching professional.

In describing her current administrator, it was in the context of having completed his first year as an administrator, newly out of the classroom. Labeling him, “the third generation,” she said that although her interactions with him were not negative, he was at a point in his professional development where he was not seasoned enough to have a firm grasp on the role of an administrator – what it means to lead a school:

The third generation kind of followed the book. He needed to have a very formalized process. And I get that – some people are big on process, where

things have to be exactly the same for everybody, right down to the point where, if you're interviewing a new teacher, for example, you couldn't go off the script. That drives me nuts.

So, while Elizabeth feels valued and depicted relatively positive interactions with her administrators, she also indicated different administrators interact with teachers differently, an idea that emerged in discussions with both Francesca and Jane. This demonstrates that professional interactions are complex and unique, resulting in transactions that are situated in the unique identities of teachers and administrators.

In sum, like Francesca and Jane, Elizabeth's professional identity is informed by both a sense of personal interest in her subject matter as well as a sense of personal agency to help her students understand both her subject matter and the broader world around them. While Elizabeth's background was middle class and not necessarily the same as her students, she demonstrated similar experiences that support her understanding of them. Of the three teachers who were interviewed, Elizabeth's professional geography was informed almost exclusively by strong, positive relationships. She felt administrators, colleagues, and students valued her voice. Although she mentioned a negative experience with parents at the onset of her employment at her school, she understood their concerns to emanate from their worldviews and did not take their negativity about the curriculum at her school personally.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the study's findings as they related to the three case studies representing teachers from each of the three schools: working class, middle class, and affluent class. The findings were considered in light of the two

research questions that guided the research. First, they sought to understand the extent to which the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching. Second, they sought to understand how the interrelated discourses of gender and class inform teachers' emotional geographies and shape their understanding of their professional identities.

The chapter began with an overview that outlined the structure of the presentation of the findings for each of the three case studies. Further, each case study presented four categories of description and findings, beginning with a brief description of the school's demographic, followed by a section highlighting the teachers' background and experience as it informed the work of teaching high school English. Next, I included a section that delved into teachers' perceptions about the work of teaching, followed by two sub-sections addressing teachers' perceptions about the nature of their curriculum and instruction in the classroom. The last major section addressed the four main relationships in which teachers engage: those with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators.

The next chapter will consider the findings presented both in this chapter, as well as those presented in Chapter 4, with a specific focus on how teachers' sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to their understanding of the work of teaching high school English, in addition to how the distinct lenses of gender and social class inform teachers' professional identities. Furthermore, Chapter 6 will also include a discussion about the implications of this research and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how emotionality contributes to female high school English teachers' understanding of the work of teaching. First, it sought to understand how the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies (Hargreaves, 2001) contributes to the teachers' perceptions of the work of teaching. In addition, the study also sought to understand how the interrelated discourses of gender and class not only inform these emotional geographies, but also how they shape teachers' professional identities.

This study was predicated on several understandings about the American public education system, starting with the composition of the teaching force, which is overwhelmingly female (Aud et al., 2012). The expansion of public education in the 19th century necessitated the inclusion of women into the teaching work force to accommodate the greater numbers of students who were attending school while paying female teachers a fraction of what male teachers were paid for the same work (Spring, 1986). Without the inclusion of female teachers, this expansion would have been impossible. Since that time, American public education has been directed by a predominantly male, upper class power structure that values and perpetuates men's ways of knowing, yet at the same time is implemented by a subservient female work force that is expected to teach to the exclusion of women's ways of knowing (Giroux, 1988b; Grumet, 1988; hooks, 1999). Furthermore, 21st century trends in American education reform, driven by a philosophical transition that views education as a business as opposed to a pathway to achieve democratic equality, have relied on – and valued – both

prescriptive curricula and cognitive measurement while devaluing the understanding that teaching is an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 1998 & 2001).

As a long time high school English teacher who has lived through this transition in the classroom, I became interested in understanding how this transition has specifically affected the ways that female high school English teachers perceive and understand their work, an area that had not previously been explored in research. Using Hargreaves' (1998, 2001) concepts of emotional understanding and emotional geographies as a framework for this research, I sought to understand the extent to which emotion contributes to teachers' perceptions about the work of teaching. As such, the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 began with a broad understanding of the work of teaching high school English as represented by 37 (f=29, m=8) survey participants. This was followed by findings that emerged from three focus groups (n=12) that were comprised of female English teachers, each representing one of three school types (working class, middle class, and affluent class), as defined by Anyon (1980). The thinking behind categorizing by class was to examine whether the socioeconomic class of the school where the teacher taught impacted teachers' perceptions, with the understanding that Anyon (1980, 1981) found distinct differences in teaching based on the socioeconomic class of the school. Finally, I conducted three hour-long individual interviews with teachers representing each of the three schools in order to further clarify and understand the teachers' perceptions about their work.

This final chapter will summarize the findings first as they relate to teachers' sociocultural and professional geographies, based on the first research question, followed by a discussion of how the interrelated discourses of gender and class informed

the teachers' perceptions of their work and, ultimately, their identities as high school English teachers. The chapter will then address the implications of these findings for the practice of teaching high school English. The chapter will conclude with a brief section discussing the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

Discussion of Research Findings

As established on p. 19 in Chapter 1, many overt and covert discourses work to comprise identity, shaping the ways in which teachers understand their work (Gee, 2008). One of the arguments set forth at the beginning of this dissertation was the idea that the dismissal of emotional factors in any analysis of teachers neglects to understand the teacher as a holistic entity. Consequently, any absence of the consideration of emotionality results in an incomplete view of a teacher's identity, as teachers' emotions influence their cognitions, motivations, and behaviors (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). It is also important to recognize that emotional experiences are unique, complex, semiotic transactions that manifest themselves differently in different individuals. Nevertheless, emotions represent "dynamic parts of ourselves" and are a key component in teaching, a profession that is "an emotional practice [that] involves significant emotional understanding and emotional labor" (Hargreaves, 1998). This section will provide a discussion of the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 in a manner that is specific to the ways in which teachers' emotional understanding affects the ways in which they perceive and understand the work of teaching, as explored in the following two research questions:

1. *In what ways does the intersection of sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching?*
2. *How do the interrelated discourses of gender and class inform emotional geographies and shape female high school English teachers' understanding of their professional identities?*

To address the first research question, I will discuss how the findings represented teachers' perceptions of the work of teaching as influenced by their sociocultural and professional geographies. Following this discussion, I will address the second research question by exploring how the discourses of gender and class informed teachers' understanding of their identities.

As discussed on pp. 50-52 of this dissertation, Hargreaves (2001) defined emotional geographies as “spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure, and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world, and each other” (p. 1061). Furthermore, Hargreaves (2001) argued that emotional geographies function as counter-discourses to traditional views of teaching that ignore the effect of teachers' emotions on the work of teaching. Within this counter-discourse, “emotions are the necessary link between the social structures in which teachers work and the ways they act” (Day et al., 2006, p. 613), specifically linking teachers' sense of identity to their emotional transactions. It is also important to note teachers' *professional geographies*, as demonstrated through their professional relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators, may also be shaped by their *sociocultural geographies*, those

relationships that are influenced or shaped by differences in social class or ethnocultural diversity.

Confirming Hargreaves' (2001) research, this study found that teachers' professional geographies were informed by the relationships in which they engaged in the course of conducting their work. For the most part, teachers viewed their professional relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators in positive terms, though the aspects of closeness and/or distance in these relationships also affected the importance teachers placed on the relationships. As discussed in Chapter 4, teachers across the three schools placed a high value on the importance of relationship building, with teachers valuing their relationships with students the highest of the four relational dynamics. This finding is not surprising given that teachers' relationships with students represent those of closest proximity – teachers interact with their students in their classrooms on a daily basis. When teachers described their relationships with students, their comments were situated in both the personal and the professional, with a greater emphasis on emotional care, reflecting Noddings' (1984) *ethic of care*. Of the four types of relationships teachers spoke about, their relationships with students were the closest and most personal for them. The other three relationships (parents, colleagues, and administrators) were similarly based on teachers' proximity, though their comments regarding these relationships were almost exclusively relegated to the professional, specifically addressing how they took up the work of teaching.

Another aspect about teachers' professional geographies that emerged concerned their teaching practice. When teachers spoke about education and teaching, they expressed themselves in terms of the greater value of education as a means to better

understand one's self and the world. Teachers viewed themselves as professionals who not only had a solid command of the subject matter they teach – the English language arts – but also were able to use their knowledge and teaching skill to actively engage students in learning while maintaining high expectations for them. Given this view, it is not surprising that when teachers spoke about the teaching methodologies they used in their classrooms, they placed a high value on having others not only view them as professionals, but that they also provide teachers the autonomy to use their discretion as professionals in order to differentiate instruction according to the needs of individual students as well as the collective classroom. When teachers were not afforded this professional consideration, they expressed frustration that their professionalism was devalued by those seeking to impose views on them regarding instruction that they themselves did not hold. Similarly, although teachers overwhelmingly understood that each of their schools had specific curriculum requirements, those who said they had little to no choice in their curriculum – whether that meant participating in the development of the curriculum or having several choices, or pathways, within their curriculum to differentiate based on the students' needs – expressed the most frustration. At the same time, several teachers also indicated that they practiced a form of silent subversion when confronted with prescriptive curricula as a way to circumvent teaching materials they deemed inappropriate or not engaging for their students. In both of these areas – curriculum and methodology – teachers said their close professional relationships with their students were the basis for these decisions, in spite of administrative or district mandates. This is consistent with the idea that external influences combined with inner feelings about their work comprise a teacher's identity (Zembylas, 2003).

Moreover, this study sought to understand how teachers' *sociocultural geographies* contribute to their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching. Given that sociocultural geographies are influenced by differences in socioeconomic class or ethnocultural diversity, I would have expected more evidence to emerge in this area. However, indications both in the focus group interviews and individual interviews regarding teachers' experiences informing this geography were not as prevalent. While it has been well established in the work cited in this dissertation that high school English teachers are overwhelmingly white, female, and middle class (see Chapter 1), teachers' expressed ethic of care regarding their students dominated the views they expressed. Whether their students were from working class, middle class, or affluent class communities, teachers did not view them in terms of socioeconomic class. Instead, the teachers who participated in this study saw their students as young people with whom they were charged with teaching, regardless of the students' circumstances. Further, there was no specific evidence that emerged to indicate teachers' relationships with colleagues or administrators were situated in sociocultural terms. At the same time, some teachers did express concern about parents, specifically those they deemed as being either uninvolved or hyperinvolved, but their expressions about parents in this regard were not exclusive to the parents' socioeconomic or ethnocultural backgrounds; rather, the sole factor they mentioned as being problematic with these two types of parents was the parents' level of involvement.

Further, this study unveiled several understandings about the role of gender in the teaching of high school English. Although women comprise a slight majority of the population in the United States, they are kept in a perpetual state of subservience

through a male minority that uses social, cultural, and political means to maintain its power and control (Bardo, 1989). Combined with scholarship that has indicated that the education system continues to reproduce gender inequality (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Spring, 1986 & 2008; Apple, 1979; Freire, 2007; Giroux, 1988a), it was not surprising to see disparities in this research according to gender, particularly in the first phase of the study, which included male high school English teachers. Although the sample was small, gender differences were evident in three areas: the grade levels taught by teachers, the types of course taught by teachers, and the amount of work teachers spent on the work of teaching outside of the school day. As discussed in Chapter 4, the grade levels taught by teachers in the study revealed a disparity in the 12th grade, where significantly more male (100%) than female (58%) teachers reported teaching this upper level grade. This may be a reflection of the view that men's ways of knowing – in this case, for men teaching upper level high school English courses – are valued more than women's ways of knowing (Grumet, 1988). Similarly, this also reflects Noddings' (1984) ethic of care, where female teachers are considered to be a better fit for younger students who require the gentle care that society deems appropriate for females to provide. Along these lines, the study also revealed that more female than male teachers reported teaching special education courses (58% to 15%), work that requires much more patience, understanding, and care. The final disparity that emerged according to gender was the amount of time teachers reported spending on the work of teaching outside of school. While more male teachers indicated spending 0-19 hours working at home, 20% more female teachers reported working 20+ hours on the work of teaching at home. Again, these findings were based on a limited number of participants, but are nevertheless worth noting.

Finally, this study sought to examine the role of social class in how female high school English teachers perceive and understand teaching. Given that “social class constitutes perhaps the single most powerful source of inequality in society” (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999), and teachers who participated in the study placed themselves solidly in the middle class, I found two distinct areas where social class was a factor in the ways teachers situated themselves: their perceptions of the purpose/value of education, and the parallels between teachers’ backgrounds and the schools where they taught. First, teachers’ perceptions of the value of education varied by the socioeconomic class of their school of employment. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, teachers from the working class school showed the least positive and most negative views of education, teachers from the middle class school demonstrated more positive and fewer negative views in this regard, while teachers from the affluent class school viewed the purpose/value of education exclusively in positive terms. One reason for this disparity may lie in administrative expectations for teachers at the three schools in terms of both the curriculum they teach and the methodologies they use to teach. These findings confirm scholarship regarding socioeconomic status where working class schools tend to have a more prescriptive view of education while affluent schools have a more flexible view of education (Willis, 1977; Anyon, 1980). In addition, the individual interviews revealed that each teacher’s background and experience was consistent with the socioeconomic status of the school where the teacher taught. For example, the teacher from the working class school had a working class background, the teacher from the middle class school had a middle class background, and the teacher from the affluent class school, while maintaining a middle class lifestyle, had a background that included

extensive exposure to the affluent class through extended family. Perhaps this was only a coincidence, as this observation is based on only three teachers. However, this is an area that could be taken up in future research.

Implications

To begin, the bulk of research concerning emotionality and teaching has been conducted outside of the United States, primarily focused in Canada, Australia, Great Britain, and China. Further, none of this research has been specific to the teaching of high school English. In contrast, this study specifically focused on high school English teachers in a specific geographical area of the United States, fulfilling previous gaps in emotionality research in terms of geography, grade level, and subject matter. As such, the study of this particular group of teachers, while not extensive or exhaustive, does provide some insight into how these teachers not only take up and understand their work, but also how their work shapes their identities, areas that have implications for teacher educators and high school administrators.

Similarly, although there is a great body of work in the field of education that examines issues of gender and class as they pertain to students, research that focuses on the influence of gender and class on teachers' identities and understandings of their profession are more limited. Traditionally, women's work has been consigned to the private sphere and, as a result, has not been considered to have "public value" (Boler, 1999). Considering how teachers take up their work by using a framework of emotionality, as seen through the relationships in which teachers engage, validates the contributions of women to the profession while making public what has long been relegated to the private. In his work, Hargreaves (2001) reasoned that further research in

the area of emotionality, specifically emotional geographies, would facilitate a framework for improving teacher efficacy by providing a previously unexplored manner by which to understand how teachers understand their work. There are several implications that emerged from this study regarding the work of teaching high school English:

1. The relationships in which teachers engage in the course of the work of teaching are important external influences that work in combination with unique, internal factors to inform their professional identities. For female high school English teachers, professional identity is not only complex, but is also individually unique. Although the teachers who participated in this study represent a small fraction of these teachers, their expression of the importance of relationships with their students, parents, colleagues, and administrators work in concert with their internal feelings to define who they are as professionals.
2. Female high school English teachers enter the profession for two reasons: they have a *sense of personal interest*, or love, for the subject matter (reading and writing); or they have a *sense of personal agency* that positions them as agents of change in their relationships with students. By acknowledging and understanding these driving factors supporting teachers' interest in the profession, English educators are better able to cultivate and direct teacher education programs in order to appeal to the factors that compel possible educators to enter the field.

This is particularly important as enrollment in teacher education programs continues to decline.

3. It is imperative to acknowledge the influence of gender in any consideration of teachers and teaching. Because 80% of high school English teachers are female, any understanding of this part of the profession must recognize not only the significant cultural difference in the socialization of girls and boys, where girls are encouraged to display a wide range of emotions more frequently and publically (Garrison, 2003), but also how that model for the expression of emotion is taken up in teachers' work, particularly in an area like English that is relationship based and contextually bound to personal experience. It is incumbent upon the institutions that dictate professional training standards for teachers, as well as curriculum and teaching methodologies, to recognize that the male-dominated, cognitively based standards that are currently the norm for defining teachers and their work represent an incomplete understanding of the profession, resulting in frustration, silence, and oppression (Campbell, 1994).

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

While providing insight into the experiences of female high school English teachers, it is also important to recognize the study's limitations as they relate to size, population, race, socioeconomic class and broad perceptions. First, the size of the study was limited, consisting of only 37 teachers at its broadest, 12 who participated in focus groups and three who provided individual interviews. While this study does offer some

interesting findings, it is important to note that a larger study might provide additional, different, or more nuanced results. Future research may be focused on conducting similar research with a larger group of teachers to see if these findings hold true under broad replication.

Moreover, another limitation to this study was the population, as it involved only high school English teachers. Because the nature of the teaching of English is unique in that the content provides for an exploration of the personal, whether through the literature students read or the writing they compose, the perceptions of these teachers may be markedly different than those of other high school content areas, such as mathematics or science. Suggestions for future research in this area would be to conduct similar work with teachers representing content areas other than English. Further, another suggestion for future research is to conduct a similar study with English teachers representing all grades from K-12 to confirm that these results are applicable across a variety of grade levels.

Although this study inadvertently began by including teachers of both genders before narrowing its focus to female teachers, another limitation is the lack of consideration of race as a factor in understanding how high school English teachers take up their work. One of the reasons this study did not take up racial analysis is due to the small number of non-white high school English teachers. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2012), 85% of high school English teachers are white, with 6.1% black and 6.7% Hispanic. While racial representation in the field is narrow, additional research in this area may wish to explore the experiences of black and

Hispanic teachers in order to provide a fuller understanding of the ways high school English teachers representing all races understand the work of teaching.

Another limitation of this study was in regard to the socioeconomic class of the school where these teachers taught and the implications inherent in this school-work relationship. Initial findings that emerged from the individual interviews indicated a possible relationship between the teacher's socioeconomic class of origin (before entering the middle class profession of teaching) and the teacher's school of employment. In this study, each of the three teachers' backgrounds were representative of or parallel to the predominant socioeconomic class of the school where the teacher taught. Future research may wish to further investigate the background and experience of teachers as they compare to the ones representative of their students in their school of employment.

Finally, this study investigated how teachers' perceptions of their relationships with others – specifically students, parents, colleagues, and administrators – informed their work. However, the study does not consider the actual perceptions these groups have about teachers themselves. Future research may be expanded to study others' perceptions in order to provide a more complete understanding of how the relationships in which teachers engage during the course of their work informs their emotional understanding as well as their professional identities.

APPENDIX A

Principal Email Query Letter

Dear Principal [last name here]:

My name is Brigitte Knudson. I am a doctoral candidate in Curriculum & Instruction/English Education at Wayne State University and am conducting a research study about the perceptions female high school English teachers have about the work of teaching. Because high school English teachers are leaving the profession in numbers greater than in any other area, with more than half of new English teachers leaving within the first five years of entering the profession (Hancock & Scherff, 2010), my research seeks to understand how emotionality contributes to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, as well as how emotionality shapes their professional identities.

I have identified your high school as one that would contribute greatly to this research. With your permission, I would like to contact your English department to inform teachers about this research and give them the opportunity to participate. The initial contact will be in the form of an email, similar to this one, explaining the study to teachers and providing a link to an online survey. The purpose of the survey is two-fold: to gain a general understanding about female high school English teachers, while also providing a means by which to recruit teachers who would be interested in participating in the research study. Teachers who choose to participate and complete the survey will receive a \$5 gift card. At the end of the survey, teachers will have the opportunity to indicate if they would like to participate in further research (interviews) about the teaching of English. Please know that any and all interview activities will be based on the individual teacher's consent to do so. All interviews will be confidential, will occur on the teacher's own time, and will be conducted during non-school hours. Attached to this email is a Research Information Sheet (Appendix B) that contains the full information about this study, as well as a copy of the survey (Appendix E).

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brigitte Knudson
Wayne State University
College of Education
Teacher Education Division

APPENDIX B

Research Information Sheet for Principal Query

Title of Study: The Convergence of Emotional Geography and Teaching: Considering the Influences of Emotionality on Female High School English Teachers' Perceptions and Understandings of Their Work

Principal Investigator (PI): Brigitte Knudson
College of Education
(734) 837-3132

Purpose

Female high school English teachers are being asked to participate in a research study about their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching. This study will be conducted via online survey, focus group interviews, and individual interviews. Interviews will be held in reserved conference rooms at local libraries convenient to the participants. The approximate number of survey participants from each school will be 10-15, the approximate number of focus group interview participants from each school will be 4-6, and the number of individual interviews, one from each focus group, will be 3. I would like to recruit approximately six teachers from your school to participate in one focus group interview. In addition, I would like to conduct one individual interview with one teacher from the focus group. **Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to forward the survey link to your female high school English teachers.**

Study Procedures

Teachers participating in the study will:

- Complete an anonymous online survey during the first two weeks of the study. The survey consists of approximately 33 questions that are mostly multiple-choice or fill in the blank responses. I have included a copy of the survey as an attachment to this email. Teachers will have the option of not answering questions they do not feel they are able to answer. Broad topics the survey addresses include questions about the teacher's background, career, and classroom teaching. At the end of the survey, teachers will be asked to indicate if they are interested in participating in a focus group interview, the second phase of the study. Those who do will be asked to provide an email address or phone contact information, while those who do not will be thanked for their participation in the survey and asked to provide an address to which they would like the gift card sent.
- Teachers who agree to participate in one of the three 60-90 minute focus group interviews will answer questions orally about their perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching high school English. Focus group interviews will take place in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th weeks of the study in a private conference room at a local public library. After these three focus group interviews, based on individual interest in further participation and responses provided during the focus group interview, one teacher from each focus group will be selected to take part in a 60-90 minute individual interview.

- Teachers who are one of the three selected for the individual interview stage of the research study will also answer questions orally about their individual experience as high school English teachers. These interviews will take place for 60-90 minutes in a private conference room in a local library one-on-one with the interviewer and occur during the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th weeks of the study. Teachers will agree to answer any follow-up questions via email in the two weeks following the individual interview.

Benefits

As participants in this research study, teachers may receive no direct benefit; however, information from this study may benefit society now or in the future as it relates to better understanding English education.

Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Costs

There will be no costs for teachers participating in this research study.

Compensation

A \$5 gift card (Amazon.com) will be given to each of the teachers who complete the survey. Teachers who participate in the 60-90 minute focus group interview will receive a \$25 Visa gift card. Lastly, the individual teacher who participates in the 60-90 minute individual interview will receive a \$50 Visa gift card. All gift cards will be distributed immediately following the completion of the activity (survey, focus group interview, or individual interview).

Confidentiality

All information collected during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Teachers will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies them personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University, or federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight [e.g., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), etc.) may review the records.

When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal the teacher's identity.

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Teachers will have the right to choose not to take part in the study. They are free to not answer any questions or to withdraw at any time. Their decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

The PI may stop any teacher's participation in this study without their consent. The PI will make the decision and let the teacher know if it is not possible to continue. The decision that is made is to protect the teacher's health and safety, or because the teacher did not follow the instructions to take part in the study.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Brigitte Knudson at the following phone number (734) 837-3132. If you have questions or concerns about the rights of the research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Participation

By completing the survey, participating in the focus group interview, or participating in the individual interview, teachers are agreeing to participate in this study.

APPENDIX C

Teacher Query Email

Dear High School English Teacher:

My name is Brigitte Knudson. I am a doctoral candidate in Curriculum & Instruction/English Education in the College of Education at Wayne State University and am conducting a research study about the perceptions high school English teachers have about the work of teaching. Because high school English teachers are leaving the profession in numbers greater than in any other area, with more than half of new English teachers leaving within the first five years of entering the profession (Hancock & Scherff, 2010), my research seeks to understand how emotionality contributes to female high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, as well as how emotionality shapes teachers' professional identities.

I have identified your teachers in your high school as ones who would contribute greatly to this research. Later in this email, a link will appear to a survey that is part of this study. The first page you will arrive at will include an Informed Consent page that explains the study. After reading this, indicate by clicking *YES* if you choose to participate and *NO* if you choose not to participate. If you choose *YES*, you will be taken to the survey, which will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. If you choose *NO*, you will be taken to an exit screen.

Teachers who choose to participate and complete the survey will receive a \$5 gift card to Amazon.com. At the end of the survey, teachers will have the opportunity to indicate if they would like to participate in further research (interviews) about the teaching of English.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brigitte Knudson
Wayne State University
College of Education
Teacher Education Division

APPENDIX D

Behavioral Research Informed Consent

Title of Study: The Convergence of Emotional Geography and Teaching: Considering the Influences of Emotionality on Female High School English Teachers' Perceptions and Understandings of Their Work

Principal Investigator (PI): Brigitte Knudson
College of Education
(734) 837-3132

Purpose

You are being asked to be in a research study about high school English teachers' perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching, because you are a current high school English teacher. This study will be conducted via online survey, focus group interviews, and individual interviews. Interviews will be held in reserved conference rooms at local libraries convenient to participants. The approximate number of survey participants will be 30-45, the approximate number of focus group interview participants will be 12-15, and the number of individual interviews will be 3. **Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.**

Study Procedures

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to:

- Complete an anonymous online survey during the first two weeks of the study. The survey consists of approximately 33 questions that are mostly multiple-choice or fill in the blank responses, and will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. You have the option of not answering questions you do not feel you are able to answer. Broad topics the survey addresses include questions about the teacher's background, career, and classroom teaching. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to indicate if you are interested in participating in a focus group interview, the second part of the study. Those who do will be asked to provide an email address or phone contact information, while those who do not will be thanked for their participation in the survey and asked to provide an address to which they would like the \$5 gift card sent.
- If you agree to participate in one of the three 60-90 minute focus group interviews, you will answer questions orally about your perceptions and understandings of the work of teaching high school English, and will be compensated in the amount of a \$25 Visa gift card at the end of the interview session. Sample interview questions will be made available prior to the interview, if requested. Focus group interviews will take place in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th weeks of the study in a private conference room at a local public library. After these three focus group interviews, based on individual interest in further participation and responses provided during the focus group interview, one teacher from each focus group will be selected to take part in a 60-90 minute individual interview.
- Teachers who are one of the three selected for the individual interview stage of the research study will also answer questions orally about their individual experience as high school English teachers, and be compensated in the amount of a \$50 Visa gift

card after completing the interview. Sample interview questions will be made available to participants prior to the interview, if requested. These interviews will take place for 60-90 minutes in a private conference room in a local library one-on-one with the interviewer and occur during the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th weeks of the study. Participants will agree to answer any follow-up questions via email in the two weeks following the individual interview.

Benefits

As participants in this research study, you may receive no direct benefit; however, information from this study may benefit society now or in the future as it relates to better understanding English education.

Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Costs

There will be no costs for teachers participating in this research study.

Compensation

For taking part in this research study, teachers will be paid for their time and inconvenience. A \$5 gift card to Amazon.com will be given to each of the teachers who complete the survey. Teachers who participate in the 60-90 minute focus group interview will receive a \$25 Visa gift card. Lastly, each of the three teachers who participate in the 60-90 minute individual interview will receive a \$50 Visa gift card. All gift cards will be distributed immediately following the completion of the activity (survey, focus group interview, or individual interview).

Confidentiality

All information collected during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies you personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University, or federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight [e.g., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), etc.] may review your records.

When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

The PI may stop your participation in this study without your consent. The PI will make the decision and let you know if it is not possible for you to continue. The decision that is made is to protect your health and safety, or because you did not follow the instructions to take part in the study.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Brigitte Knudson at the following phone number (734) 837-3132. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Participation

By clicking on the survey link below, you are agreeing to participate in the study.
[once approved, survey link will appear here]

APPENDIX E

Research Study Survey

Personal

1. Check the box that accurately reflects your gender identification.
☐ female ☐ male
2. Check the box that indicates your age.
☐ 21-25
☐ 26-30
☐ 31-35
☐ 36-40
☐ 41-45
☐ 46-50
☐ 51-55
☐ 60+
3. Check the box that indicates your status.
☐ divorced ☐ in a relationship ☐ married ☐ single

Career

4. How many years have you been a teacher?
☐ 0-2 years
☐ 3-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ 11-15 years
☐ 16-20 years
☐ 21 – 25 years
☐ 25 years or more
5. How many years have you taught high school English?
☐ 0-2 years
☐ 3-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ 11-15 years
☐ 16-20 years
☐ 21 – 25 years
☐ 25 years or more
6. Was teaching your first career choice? ☐ YES ☐ NO
7. If teaching was not your first career choice, list your first career choice in the blank provided. _____
8. If teaching high school English was your first career choice, list the reason(s) why you chose teaching English as a career in the space provided.

Family

9. Indicate your mother's profession in the blank provided. _____

10. Check the box that best reflects your mother's highest level of education.
- ☐ some high school
 - ☐ high school diploma
 - ☐ some college
 - ☐ 2 year college degree
 - ☐ 4 year college degree
 - ☐ some graduate school
 - ☐ master's degree
 - ☐ doctorate degree
11. Indicate your father's profession in the blank provided. _____
12. Check the box that best reflects your father's highest level of education.
- ☐ some high school
 - ☐ high school diploma
 - ☐ some college
 - ☐ 2 year college degree
 - ☐ 4 year college degree
 - ☐ some graduate school
 - ☐ master's degree
 - ☐ doctorate degree
13. Check the box that best describes your/your family's socioeconomic status when you were growing up.
- ☐ poverty
 - ☐ working class
 - ☐ middle class
 - ☐ upper middle class
 - ☐ upper class
14. Check the box that best describes your current socioeconomic status.
- ☐ poverty
 - ☐ working class
 - ☐ middle class
 - ☐ upper middle class
 - ☐ upper class
15. Check the box that best describes your current yearly household income.
- ☐ \$0 - \$12,000
 - ☐ \$12,001 - \$24,000
 - ☐ \$24,001 - \$36,000
 - ☐ \$36,001 - \$48,000
 - ☐ \$48,001 - \$60,000
 - ☐ \$60,001 - \$72,000
 - ☐ \$72,001 - \$84,000
 - ☐ \$84,001 - \$96,000
 - ☐ \$96,001 - \$108,000
 - ☐ \$108,000 +

Teaching

16. Which grade level do you teach? (Check all that apply)
- ☐ 9th grade ☐ 10th grade ☐ 11th grade ☐ 12th grade

17. Which grad level comprises the majority of students you teach each day?
☐ 9th grade ☐ 10th grade ☐ 11th grade ☐ 12th grade
18. Identify the types of high school English classes you teach. (Check all that apply)
☐ Required
☐ Elective
☐ Resource Room
☐ Co-Taught
☐ General Education
☐ Special Education
☐ Accelerated/Advanced/AP
19. Indicate how many hours you spend each week beyond the school day working on school-related work (grading, planning, etc.)? _____
20. Do you sponsor any English related school clubs or activities? ☐ Yes ☐ No
21. If yes, name the clubs or activities you sponsor in the blank provided.

 —
22. Do you sponsor any non-English related school clubs or activities? ☐ Yes ☐ No
23. If yes, name the clubs or activities you sponsor in the blank provided.

 —
24. On a scale of 1 (none) to 5 (complete), indicate the amount of autonomy you feel you have as a classroom teacher to determine and/or choose your curriculum (*what you teach*). ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
25. On a scale of 1 (none) to 5 (complete), indicate the amount of autonomy you feel you have as a classroom teacher to teach in the manner you deem appropriate (*how you teach*). ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
26. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), rate your general relationship with your students. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
27. Fill in the blank (one word): My students would describe me as a _____ teacher.
28. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), rate your general relationship with your colleagues at school. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
29. Fill in the blank (one word): My colleagues would describe me as a _____ teacher.
30. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), rate your general relationship with the parents of your students. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
31. Fill in the blank (one word): My students' parents would describe me as a _____ teacher.

32. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), rate your general relationship with your school and/or district administrators. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
33. Fill in the blank (one word): My administrators would describe me as a _____ teacher.

After responding to question 33, participants will be taken to a new screen that will say the following:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this research study survey.

If you are **interested** in participating in the second stage of the study, a 60-90 minute focus group interview that will occur in a private room at a nearby public library, please click YES. Teachers who complete the focus group interview will receive a \$25 Visa gift card (in addition to the \$5 gift card for participating in the survey). By clicking YES, you will be taken to a page where you will provide your email address and contact information for the researcher.

If you are **not interested** in participating further, please click NO and you will be taken to a screen with information on how to obtain your \$5 gift card.

APPENDIX F

Focus Group Interview Questions

Protocol

First, I would like to thank you for agreeing to be a part of this focus group interview. Please be assured that your identity will remain anonymous and the only people who will view this information are me (the researcher), my research advisor, or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University. During this focus group interview, I will be recording my questions and your responses via a digital audio recording device, and will type a transcript of this event on my home computer using the audio recording to accurately represent our interaction today. I will be coding each person in the group with a unique number/letter combination to completely protect your identity. Again, thank you for volunteering to participate in this focus group interview on your free time. As we begin, keep in mind that you may withdraw at any time. If I ask a question – or questions – that you are uncomfortable with or prefer not to answer, just let me know and we will move on. If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please ask, and I will happily answer them for you.

Questions Focusing on Teaching

1. How many years have you been a high school English teacher?
2. What kinds of words or ideas come to mind when you think about school and/or education?
3. When you hear the word “teacher,” what comes to mind?
4. When you hear the term “high school English teacher,” what comes to mind?
5. What kinds of qualities do effective (or good) English teachers have?
6. What kinds of qualities do ineffective (or poor) English teachers have?

Questions Focusing on General Perceptions of Teachers

7. In your opinion, how are high school English teachers perceived by the public? The media?
8. Before you became a high school English teacher, what were your perceptions about what it means to be a high school English teacher?
9. Since becoming a teacher, what perceptions do you now have about what it means to be a teacher?

Questions Focusing on Relationships between Students and Teachers

10. Discuss the role(s) you think teachers should have in the classroom when teaching and working with students.
11. How would your students describe you as a teacher?
12. How would your students describe you as an individual?

Questions Focusing on Relationships between Parents and Teachers

13. Describe the ideal relationship between parents and teachers. Is this the reality?
14. How would your students’ parents describe you as a teacher?
15. How would your students’ parents describe you as an individual?

Questions Focusing on Relationships between Colleagues and Teachers

16. Describe the ideal relationship between colleagues at school. Is this the reality?
17. How would your colleagues describe you as a teacher?
18. How would your colleagues describe you as an individual?

Questions Focusing on Relationship between Administrators and Teachers

19. Describe the relationship or interactions you have with school and/or district administrators.
20. How would your evaluating administrator describe you as a teacher?
21. How would your evaluating administrator describe you as an individual?

APPENDIX G

Individual Interview Questions

Protocol

First, I would like to thank you for agreeing to be a part of this 60-90 minute individual interview. Please be assured that your identity will remain anonymous and the only people who will view this information are me (the researcher), my research advisor, or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University. During this individual interview, I will be recording my questions and your responses via a digital audio recording device, and will type a transcript of this event on my home computer using the audio recording to accurately represent our interaction today. Your identity will be hidden and coded with a unique number/letter combination to completely protect your identity. Again, thank you for volunteering to participate in this individual interview on your free time. As we begin, keep in mind that you may withdraw at any time. If I ask a question – or questions – that you are uncomfortable with or prefer not to answer, just let me know and we will move on. If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please ask, and I will happily answer them for you.

Questions Focusing on the Teacher's Background and Understanding

1. Please describe your educational background and teacher certification.
2. In your opinion, what does it mean to be a teacher?
3. What are the reasons you chose to be a high school English teacher?
4. Discuss the preparation you had in order to become a high school English teacher.
What was useful? What was not useful? How could it be done better or differently given what you know now?

Questions Focusing on Teaching High School English

5. What are all the words you would use to describe being a high school English teacher?
6. What are all the words others (students, parents, colleagues, administrators, media) would use to describe being a high school English teacher?
7. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
8. Describe the hiring process for your current position.
9. How would others (students, parents, colleagues, administrators, etc.) describe you as a teacher?
10. What makes a high school English teacher successful?
11. What makes a high school English teacher not successful?
12. What are the most challenging aspects of teaching high school English?
13. What are the most rewarding aspects of teaching high school English?
14. How do other opinions about your work affect how you do your job?
15. If you could rewind the clock to the time you were ready to enter the teaching profession, would you do it? Why/why not?
16. What advice would you give to someone who is considering a career in teaching high school English?

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ABSTRACT**THE CONVERGENCE OF EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHY AND TEACHING:
CONSIDERING INFLUENCES OF EMOTIONALITY ON FEMALE
HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORK**

by

BRIGITTE DIANE KNUDSON**August 2016****Advisor:** Dr. Gina DeBlase**Major:** Curriculum and Instruction**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

This qualitative research study explored the ways in which sociocultural and professional emotional geographies contribute to female high school English teachers' perceptions of the work of teaching, as well as how they shape their professional identities. Data collection methods over a 12-week period included a researcher reflective journal, survey, focus group interviews, and individual interviews.

The study sought to understand how female high school English teachers understand the work of teaching and considered their perceptions through lenses of gender and socioeconomic class of both the teacher and the teacher's school of employments. To this end, the findings represented both a broad view of all initial participants ($n=37$), which allowed analysis according to both gender and socioeconomic class, as well as a more nuanced view based on three case studies, where each teacher represented a working class, middle class, or affluent class school.

The findings that emerged from this study provide specific insight into how high school English teachers understand the work of teaching. Teachers' sociocultural and

professional geographies are informed by the relationships in which they engage in the course of conducting their work. Teachers across the three schools placed a high value on the importance of relationship building, but the basis for their relationships is also informed by proximities of closeness and distance. Similarly, teachers' professional identities were constructed according to their understanding of these relationships, but not exclusively. They were also affected by the teacher's own sense of personal interest in their subject matter, as well as a personal sense of agency that their work ultimately supported the greater social good.

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